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Short Stories

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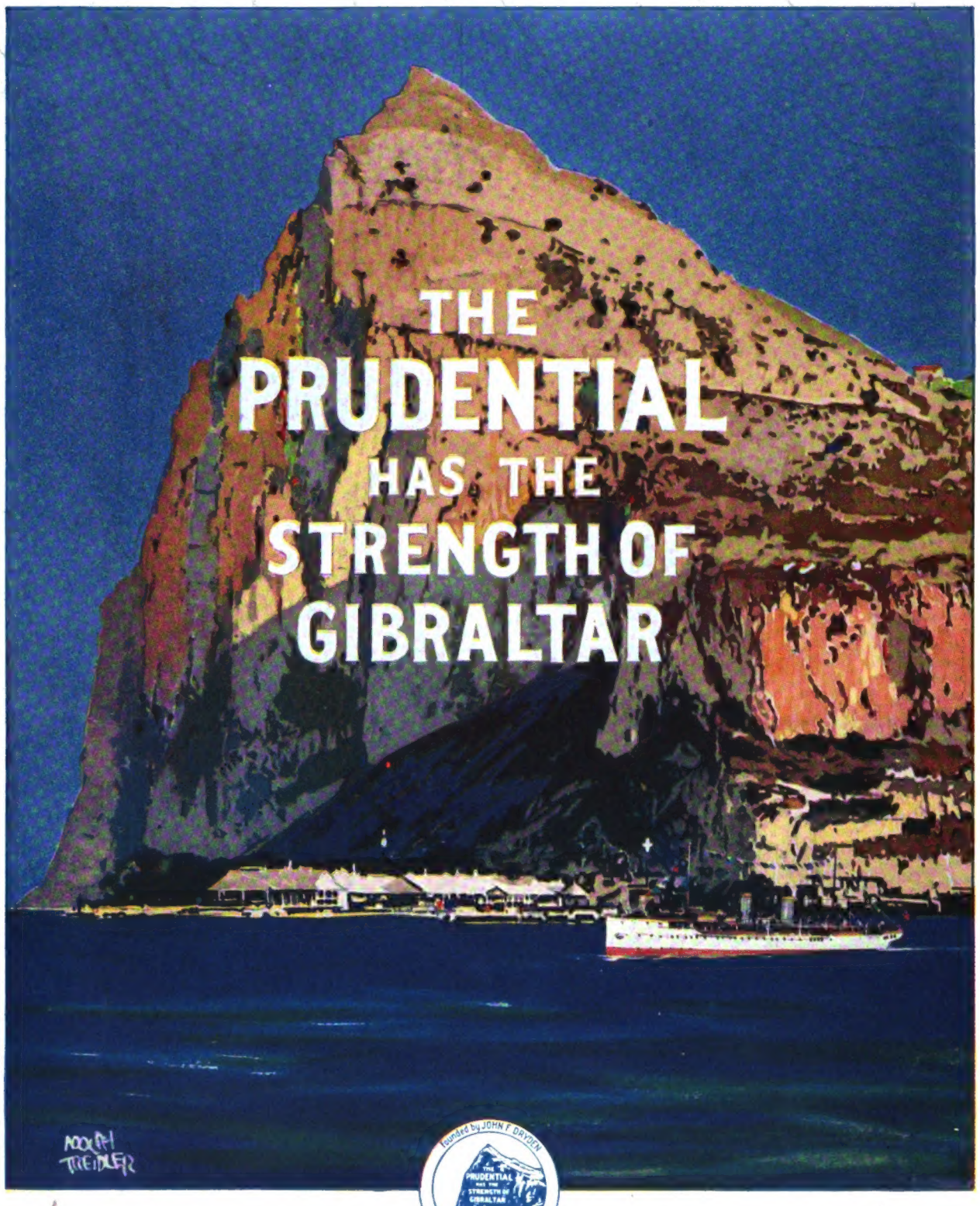

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The Old Swimming-Hole.

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LATHER
RUB a cake of Ivory Soap between your wet hands, and watch the wonderful Ivory lather foam up in millions of lively bubbles.
Rub the lather into your skin. Notice how grateful it feels—not a suggestion of irritation. Notice that it does not dry down nor go "flat," but spreads its velvety coat over your entire body.
Dash water upon it. See it vanish instantly. Observe the clear, satiny smoothness it gives to your skin, and the exhilarating sense of perfect cleanliness which envelops you.
Do you wonder that the people who use Ivory Soap can be satisfied with no other?
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Everybody's Magazine

NUMBER TWO AUGUST, 1920 VOLUME XLIII

The Shansi Woman

By William J. Neidig

"In the province of Shansi they have a ridiculous custom, which is to marry dead folks to each other."—MARCO POLO.

This story centers about a man whose right to choose his own widow was grievously interfered with. It was a complicated and criminal interference, involving a number of people and a curious assortment of devices including anastigmats and milk strikes The plot and the detection of it make one of William J. Neidig's best stories. This is that popular writer's first—but not his last—appearance in EVERYBODY'S.

THOSE who know the history of Chicago like to point out the spot, now partly river channel, upon which stood the first Fort Dearborn. The south end of the Rush Street bridge rests upon this old site. River Street, one block long, ends upon it from the southwest. Michigan Avenue directs its traffic over it.

That first Dearborn passed away with the massacre of 1812. It was succeeded, as shown on the earlier maps, by another Fort Dearborn, with near it, to the west, a barn, and near the barn to the south a garden, and near the garden to the east a well, and southwest of the well a grave. The grave stood in the middle of the diagonal road known as Hubbard's Trail, which started at B. Beaubien's store and led southwest to Danville. The old mouth of the river lay well south of this store, opposite the later Madison Street. The village graveyard rose a few rods inland, under what is now the busiest street corner in the world.

In many American cities the older streets have become particularly the home of the coffee trade. This has been true of Chicago. The Fort Dearborn district, and especially that portion of it which lies adjacent to the barn, the garden, the well, and the grave, long ago became used to the rumble of coffee trucks and tea vans. Even to-day, the ventilators piercing the upper walls pour forth pencils of vapor so pungently penetrating that the savor of their essence, when the wind does not forbid, carries through the cañons of the Loop, in spite of the intervening smoke-stacks.

The firm of David Bellew & Co., teas, coffees and spices, had its office within this district of fragrances.

At the time of this story the firm consisted of David Bellew alone. There had been a partner, but Bellew had long ago bought out his interest, and now the latter portion of the firm name was merely an outgrown appendix, retained because of its advertising value. The offices of the firm had likewise been outgrown. Bellew, however, had never felt quite at ease in the huge factory on the West Side, and had retained his crowded, smoky little quarters near the grave and the well long after they were silted shallow with browned papers.

David Bellew had become during the years of his strength a wealthy man. His merchandising had been profitable; fortunate investments had paid him fabulous returns; so much was known. He was reputed to be worth between ten and twenty millions of dollars, some placing a still higher value upon his holdings. He had no living brothers or sisters, but there was an old-fashioned niece, Emily Bellew, daughter of his younger brother. Emily lived with her mother in Cincinnati.

The report of Bellew's death had been like a thunderclap from a clear sky. For no reason at all he had been seized with a whim to visit the Pacific Coast. The next word was that he was dead. Following this, almost before the newspapers that announced it were displaced by later editions, came word that his wife was on her way to Chicago to assume charge of his affairs. Chicago had not known that there was a wife. The newspapers also contained hints of a will in favor of this wife. Chicago had supposed that the niece would inherit his estate.

THERE was a man named Harrington who lived in a town named Eden Center, in Illinois. And there was also an attorney named Brett, who lived on Sheridan Road. Upon the Thursday morning of the second week following the news of David Bellew's death, this Eden Center man left his hotel in Chicago for a journey along the city streets toward this Sheridan Road man's offices. Brett had been David Bellew's attorney. Harrington had an appointment with the attorney for half-past eleven. He was carrying a small hand-camera.

Harrington was not a stranger in Chicago, nor was this his first call upon Brett. He knew he could reach his building in five minutes. The hour was scarce half-past ten. He therefore was in no hurry, but tarried now and then before some window display to feed his imagination with pictures.

He proceeded leisurely along the street to Lake Street, and along the left side of Lake to the corner of Dearborn. Here he turned south. After a little he arrived before the window of a camera shop in which was exhibited a huge German airplane camera, together with its awe-inspiring war accessories, such as a set of miracle-working light-filters for filtering out the fogs and smoke of battle; a battery of plates, ruled for mapping purposes, in tempered Jena glass; the automatic magazines for the plates, and a spare focal-plane shutter, in case the camera-shutter should become jammed. He had noticed the camera the day before. The great lens, of the focal length of twenty-eight inches and the almost startling aperture of one-fifth that, or F 5, as expressed in terms of optics, fascinated him. He had not dreamed that an anastigmatic lens could be constructed so large.

As he stood before the window marveling at the focal length and the speed of the huge anastigmat, he reflected idly upon the optical principles involved. He wondered whether a mirror lens, such as astronomers use, could not be designed to do the same work. Perhaps it could not; he did not know. A mirror lens would not require the five corrections and it could be constructed just as easily fast as slow. The suggestion led his eye to the reflected image of the street upon the surface of the plate-glass window. The glass constituted only an imperfect mirror, but with its black background of cameras, the image upon the surface was exceedingly sharp. He wondered why the thing could not be done.

It was as he stood thus before the display of cameras in the window, apparently looking at the fast anastigmat, but in reality watching the changing image upon the plate-glass, that a surprising thing occurred. He was idly watching the strangers who walked past behind him. Suddenly he found himself watching a face that was familiar—that of a woman he had known in girlhood as Lissie Peters. Lissie was alone; but although Harrington knew that she saw him, she walked past with quickly averted eyes, as if fearing he would turn, which was as he wished. He had no desire to speak to her.

AFTER gazing at the lens a little longer he went inside to ask questions. One of the filters in the window was a so-called gold-filter. What was a gold-filter? The lens was marked "triplet" on the barrel. Did that mean it was on the order of a Cooke triplet? Or was it one of Rudolph's or Harting's anastigmatic developments, like the Tessar or Heliar? He made notes of the information upon a reporter's pad, for use when he returned home.

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Upon coming out of the store he again stopped before the cannon-like lens-barrel to note the details of its mounting. He knew a little about lenses—he himself owned a fast anastigmat. Besides, if he did not tarry before this window he would have to tarry before some other, for he was still three-quarters of an hour ahead of his appointment.

It was as he stood thus studying the powerful anastigmat, that a stranger who had stopped at his elbow suddenly began speaking to him.

"Big lens," said the man.

"Big, is right. It has everything—all the corrections, speed, focal length, everything. Best I ever saw."

"You ought to see a French lens I know of. A little Belgian tailor owns it, name of Bergman."

"Larger than this? I'd like to see it."

"You can—easy. Bergman is proud of it like he had made it. He is proud to show the lens."

"Where is this man Bergman?"

"In the basement of the Gilson Block. It ain't so far out of your way, at that." He added the street and number. "Bergman. Just walk right in and ask to see his lens."

HARRINGTON did not think to wonder how this stranger knew what would or would not be out of his way. It did not occur to him to connect the man with Lissie. He looked at his watch; the hour was not yet eleven. He saw that he would have time and to spare for a glance at the other lens.

"I'll do that little thing. Thanks."

"You'll sure be interested," said the stranger. Then he repeated the address. "You can't miss it."

Harrington nodded and turned away, walking now a little more rapidly. By the time he reached the address that had been given him the hour was eleven-seven. The building was old, the steps dark, and the short corridor at the foot as little inviting as the door that bore Bergman's half-effaced sign. Following instructions, he turned the knob and stepped through into the room.

For a moment he thought the room was unoccupied. But its shadows had deceived him. Even as he stood inside the door he heard a light footstep behind him.

There is nothing inherent in the sound of a footstep to cause an honest man to turn. Footsteps come and footsteps go. If a man were to have an attack of nerves every time a footstep crossed his long shadow, he would pass his life tied up in a camphor bandage and nothing would get done.

It was not the sound of footsteps that startled Harrington into whirling upon his heel; it was the sound of *this* footstep. The action was instinctive and instantaneous; there was no time to reason it out; but somehow, for some reason that lay deeper than logic, he felt that this sound was a menace, that it threatened his safety, that it was a deadly thing, murderous, black.

He whirled to face the menace behind him as instinctively as he would have thrown out his arm to break a fall. Had his mind instead of his instinct controlled his action he would not have whirled; instead, he would have thrown his weight against the edge of the heavy door, now almost closed, and dodged back into the corridor that led to the street.

Yet the swift action served a purpose. For he saw, even as he faced about, that an attack from behind was impending. Not four feet away stood the ominous figure of a man with a knife, his left hand extended upon the dark wall. The light from the front door showed his features plainly. Harrington recognized him as a man going by the name of Bellew.

"Hello!" he cried. "So it's you!"

The other stood motionless for a moment, as if studying how best to attack.

"What are you doing with the knife, David Bellew?"

The man he had spoken to did not reply; but he could see the muscles of his face twitching, which, if not a reply, was a response of a sort. The humorous thought occurred to him, even in this moment of danger, that Bellew's eyes were out of focus—instead of looking at him he seemed to look through him and beyond him. His body stood ready to leap, but at the same time his eyes did not seem to see Harrington at all. The man had a good reason for looking past Harrington; he was watching the stealthy approach of a companion out of the shadows beyond the door.

"Put down that knife, Bellew! Put it down!"

Harrington had entered the room with his camera carried in his right hand. Although it was small and fragile, and no weapon with which to fight down murder, he now tightened his grasp upon it, at the same time raising it and shifting his feet so that his body was better balanced. Then as quick as light and with all the strength of his baseball arm, he threw. His opponent did not try to dodge the missile; he did not expect it to be thrown, and merely drew back out of range. The sharp edge of the camera caught him fairly upon the wrist; whereupon the knife was sent smashing against the brick wall opposite with such force that the point snapped off and blade and haft slid whirling back along the floor.

That was the last Harrington knew. Something struck him from behind; he saw Orion and the Pleiades, Algol and Aldebaran; then he crumpled into shapelessness upon the floor, When they found him he was lying upon his back in the dust, his right arm doubled sharply under his blood-smeared shoulder, his left extended toward the light.

II

IN ORDER to understand the dark basement and Harrington, and Harrington's recognition of the man called David Bellew, you must go back with me to another basement, but a better lighted one, upon an evening ten months earlier.

The time was in November, the place an alcove off one of the rooms behind Joe Quilley's buffet. Three men and a woman were seated round a table conversing in low tones.

Quilley's buffet has no present existence; it closed its doors after the one-half-of-one-per-cent. law went into effect. But at the time of this story, Quilley's place was the center of life and levity, with a reputation all its own and a patronage that had entrance into the best houses along the Lake Shore Drive, especially at night. If one knew when to visit Quilley's one could see there Larry the Dip, or Sudden the Blood, or Patella Pete, or this or that member of the Cracker Pool outfit, or, indeed, almost any celebrity of the West Side. The human race is not the only race that is gregarious.

At the present hour Quilley's was almost deserted. It never became so filled that a table could not be found for Jack and Jill, but later in the evening there was more movement back and forth through the entrances, and greater lightheartedness among the patrons everywhere. The four seated at the table had known this well enough; they were not strangers here. They had chosen this one hour exactly because it was not popular. While conversation at Quilley's at any time and upon any subject, Sunday-schools and churches alone excepted, was safe enough, they preferred the moment of pause when fewer were present.

The four in the alcove were known among themselves as Baldy, Breaker, Lush and Lissie. Of these, Baldy, of the complexion and hairlessness of an egg, was seated nearest the door. Breaker, a few years older, sat opposite him; Lush, a few years younger, was at his right; and Lissie, youngest of all sat across the table from Lush.

Breaker was speaking. Although ostensibly replying to Lush he was looking at Lissie. "If we pull it off in Lissie's burg that will be smoother. That way she gets better witnesses. Somebody has got to know her. If we pick some other burg she's got to move in ahead and fix things like she was born there. That will take longer."

"I CAN work any kinda way," said Lissie. "But I'd kinda like to work from the old town. I got a coupla knocks laid up against a coupla hicks in that burg."

"You know old Bellew good enough this minute. With Lush in the garage to tip us off, we don't need you there now."

"That's right," said Lush. "Lissie's been working inside long enough to make it look probable."

"I've been Mr. Bellew's second maid for over three months."

"Too bad the old geezer didn't fall for her a little," said Baldy.

"That don't cut no ice whatever," replied Breaker. "Not if he marries her like he's going to."

"Yes, after he's dead," said Lush.

Breaker looked furtively over his shoulder, but the room remained unoccupied. No outsider was listening. "Before he's dead."

"Let me get this straight," said Lush. "I'm there already in old Bellew's garage. Lissie is there already in the house. What then?"

"You don't come in yet at all," said Baldy. "Not for a long time yet."

"Yes, he does," said Breaker.

"How is that?"

"Lush watches him where he goes. If Lissie quits inside and can't watch him and I marry her up there in that hick town on the same day old Bellew makes a public speech in Cleveland, that will look funny afterward. Lush sticks to Bellew like a wad of gum. If he even goes to a lodge meeting that day Lush wires us, see?"

"He better wire me, not you guys," said Baldy.

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He married Lissie before two witnesses during the afternoon and carried her off on the five o'clock train.

"That's right. He can wire you the price of something."

"The price of coffee. I'm going into the coffee business, see? I go up there ahead, and start a coffee store. That way I buy all my coffee of old Bellew and get inside by mail. I can write Bellew a letter easy, asking him about something. That way I get his sig."

"We need his sig two or three times," said Breaker.

"I only need it once."

"We got to have it on a wedding certificate for Lissie, don't we? That's one. Then we got to have it on a will, don't we? That's two. And maybe others. We need it two or three times."

"I can get it."

"YOU get the sig so I can be learning to write it for the wedding certificate." Breaker was the handwriting expert of the company. "You do that as quick as you can. If we work from Lissie's town we can begin as soon as we get the sig almost. The will we can work different. I'll sign it more careful fifteen or twenty times beforehand and pick out the best. Sleeve work, see?"

"But they'll watch you sign it," said Lush.

"Them hicks?" Lissie tossed her pretty nose in scorn. "You can make them see you sign it standing on your head and they won't know it's Wednesday."

"I can fix it," said Baldy. "I can fix up a special desk so they can't."

"We ought to begin calling each other by our new names, so we won't make any breaks."

"Lissie might start in any time," said Breaker. "She might begin right now—learning to say Dave."

"They call him Mr. Bellew, almost everybody," said Lissie. "I'm calling him the same. Anyhow I am until we're married."

"After that you can call him honey or ducky or some tubby name."

"I'll call you husband."

"Breaker has a pipe remembering his name," said Baldy.

"Lissie is the girl who has the pipe," Br aker retorted. "She don't have to change her name; all she has to do is to take her old name people knew her by before."

"What was your name, Lissie?"

"Lissie Peters."

"Stick that in your hatband, Breaker. She's Lissie Peters until you marry her, and after that she's your wife."

"We all better practise calling her Mrs. Bellew for the time after she marries me."

"You better start on me, if I open a coffee store in that burg. You don't want to forget and call me Baldy. I'm Matthew Matters now."

"*Mr.* Matters," said Lissie. "My husband wouldn't call you by your first name."

"How long is this funny work going to take?" asked Lush.

"Long enough to do it right and proper. How would it look to have me marry a rich husband, and him die off the next week? Eight or nine months, and maybe longer. This is some big job—don't forget that."

"The biggest ever pulled, kid." Baldy's cold eyes began to shine at the thought. "A flat twenty million. Five million apiece. Five million shining iron men. Some big job is right."

He glanced uneasily at a group of newcomers, but these sought out a secluded table for themselves, and after a moment Lush continued his search for knowledge.

"How long after the will before——"

"Before we can use it? Nobody knows. He might come down almost any day after that with typhoid, or take a drug by mistake, or get his car wrecked in an accident. Life is uncertain."

"He could take something slow-acting and natural."

"The natural part don't cut any ice at all."

"Even splits," said Lush. "Flat even."

"Neck and neck. Sure. There's stake enough for everybody."

"If we put it over we can build fires with our money," Breaker agreed.

"If? If? I don't know if," said Lissie. "This is a cinch. We can't lose. Not with them signed papers."

"Not unless some dick spots us."

"That wouldn't hurt the main job none," said Breaker. "You and me don't appear in the big ring. Only Lissie. Lissie is just David Bellew's widow. After I marry her it's like she says: the papers will be straight, and that's all she needs. All we do is to start the game for Lissie."

By this time two more groups of Quilley's regular patrons had arrived, one of them taking seats at a table just outside the alcove. The quartet thereupon shifted their conversation to other matters. After a little they arose, Lissie leaving with Lush for David Bellew's house on the drive.

III

LISSIE returned to Eden Center shortly after Christmas. The time to make friends with Fortune is while she is facing you; she can not be stopped from behind.

Among those who remembered her most clearly was the editor of the Eden Center *News*.

Harrington at this time was a young man of twenty-eight. Like all newspaper men, he was curious to know; but whereas editor Blake, his predecessor, had been curious up to the two thousand words or three of his story, Harrington's curiosity had little to do with column lengths. The instinct to see for himself, to verify, to search out causes, to take nothing for granted that could be proved or disproved, lay deep within his nature and had matured with it.

He had always sought to see things himself. Thus Miss Barnum, his teacher in the third grade, one day found him pulling butterflies apart to see for himself what was inside them. A few weeks later another teacher caught him at work upon a frog, happily deceased, with his new iron pocket-knife. Later still he took the back off the family clock for a look on his own account at the wheels. He had hatched moths' eggs, waited out cocoons in bottles, dug for rats in the barnyard, started fires in dry leaves with an opera-glass lens. Later he worked out the focus of that same lens and made himself a camera. Had he gone to college he would have spent his waking hours in some laboratory verifying the length of light-waves at the red end of the spectrum, or making certain for himself the exact relationship between benzin and metol.

But instead of going to college he became a printer's devil. During the next few years he learned the printing business, all that could be taught him in a country town, and in addition kept up a very

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promising interest in photography. He had already acquired a smattering of chemistry and physics in high school, and odds and ends of other knowledge in the public library and elsewhere. He was thus able, when the *News* needed a cut to illustrate the Burnside tragedy, to take Blake's pen-drawing to his dark room and return three hours later with a line cut. The cut was shallow, the zinc thin, the base of spongy pine, but it could be printed from.

It was this feat that lifted him out of his printer's shoes. The editor and owner, immensely pleased with the cut, had young Harrington write a half-column description to accompany it. The article was so vividly written and showed such acuteness of inference that it might have stood as the state's case against old man Burnside. Harrington did not return to the apron and the galley, but became a reporter and subeditor. Upon the owner's death a few years later he succeeded him as editor of the *News*. Later still he became likewise its owner.

HIS acquaintance with Lissie Peters dated from an early tragedy that he had reported for the *News*. A miser named Miller had been murdered for his money. Harrington, arriving among the first, found an impression in the dirt of the road outside—a mark that had been left by an irregular patch upon the tread of an automobile tire. This track he was able to follow into town. He inferred that the patch was upon the rear tire; if upon the front, the rear tire would have blotted out the impression. He inferred also that the car was bound for town, for its tracks showed that it had passed another and the driver would have turned out to the right.

This clue came near being abandoned when they reached town, for when the track led the editor to Blake's gate, the deputy-sheriff with him was sure that it had been made by the Blake runabout and meant nothing.

"Maybe so," said Harrington, "but suppose we see. Suppose instead of guessing, we look at the runabout."

This they did forthwith. The tires of the Blake car proved to be entirely free from patches.

"That settles that. Not the runabout."

But if not the Blake car, why had it stopped here? Why should a murder car have called at editor Blake's front gate? The deputy-sheriff did not believe it had stopped.

"Let's ask Mrs. Blake and find out," said Harrington.

"Why, yes," was the reply to the question. "A friend of Lissie's stopped for her last night. Lissie Peters," she explained. "Lissie's working for me. She's at the store just now for groceries. They went out for a drive."

She had never seen this friend in a good light and had never heard his name. She thought he could be identified through Lissie. Perhaps they might watch Lissie's mail. He would probably write. Could that be done? Harrington believed that it could.

The murderer was captured in this manner before the end of the week, through a letter to Lissie, mailed from the neighboring town of Weston, and signed by a garage hand named Weiler. The murder car—borrowed without permission—was discovered in the garage, tire and all. The finding of the stolen hoard completed the case against Weiler, who had acted rather stupidly throughout.

The involving by Harrington of Lissie in this murder, and the bringing home by him of the crime to her lover, roused in her the intensest hatred. She did not attempt during the trial to disguise this hatred. Every one who saw her or talked with her knew of it. She hated Harrington by height and by depth, by right and by wrong, by gift and by hire. She had no ideas that were not associated with the passionate desire to bring harm upon him.

She also hated, and with even more fierceness, the woman who had spoken of Weiler's call. She had never liked Mrs. Blake; now she wished only to bring her to utter ruin. She did not conceal this feeling any more than she had concealed her hatred for Harrington. Any one who looked might read it in her smoldering black eyes.

The knowledge that Lissie felt this keen hatred for him troubled Harrington, but he understood human nature well enough to know that her feeling was a natural one. Few criminals love the detectives who arrest them or the judge who sentences them. He did not resent her hatred, nor wonder at it, but he wished she might find the smoother roads before the rough ones shook her up too hopelessly.

Both Harrington and the Blakes would have been glad had she stayed, but Lissie could not be induced to remain in Eden Center after the trial. A few months later the Eastmans spoke of seeing her in Chicago in a cafeteria; they were not close enough to speak to her. Solomon Cook also had a glimpse of her in Chicago, but much later than this. He was the last to see her.

NOW she was back in Eden Center. The report that Lissie Peters had gone to work for Mrs. Blake, whom she had hated so keenly, aroused Harrington's wonder. He had already seen her on the street. She had not changed greatly in appearance during the years, nor could she have greatly changed her position in the world. She must be the same Lissie. And yet, servant though she still was, something about her was not the same. He wondered what had brought her back to Eden Center. Not Mrs. Blake's wages, he was certain.

He saw her often after this, and always her greetings were friendly. She seemed to have forgotten the murder trial. Both her old hatreds seemed to have disappeared.

He thought he saw the explanation of her presence six weeks later, when, in the list of marriage licenses supplied to him by the county clerk's office, he found that a license to wed had been issued to David Bellew, of Chicago, age fifty-two, and Lissie Peters, of Eden Center, age twenty-eight.

The item in a sense was unimportant; Lissie was only a servant; she had made few friends; nothing that could happen to her would be subject matter for a large article. Nevertheless, Harrington telephoned, making inquiries about the intended bridegroom. Mrs. Blake told him what Lissie had told her. According to Lissie, David Bellew worked in a store in Chicago, and she and he had been engaged for several months. Harrington wrote a paragraph one stick long about the wedding, but he did not place a head-line on it, nor did he telegraph it abroad.

Had he identified the David Bellew of the marriage license with David Bellew of the Chicago coffee trade, he would have thrown a display head in twelve-line pica condensed gothic across his front page, and would have wired the news to the ends of the earth, and there would have been a sensation. But in that case there would have been no wedding.

Thus Breaker, now calling himself David Bellew, was able to come to Eden Center unheralded. Nothing about him attracted even passing attention. He had a plate luncheon at the hotel, married Lissie before two witnesses during the afternoon, and carried her off on the five-o'clock train.

During the month that followed, the editor heard nothing either of Lissie or her new husband. Then one evening the Bellews drove up before his front gate in a beautiful twelve-cylinder Dunkard. The car was deep and roomy and soft-spoken, and its engine was of a power to play snap-the-whip with seventeen runabouts of the Eden Center class. They had dropped around, they said, to take him for a ride; Mrs. Blake, too, if they could get her to go.

"Just a little spin for a little visit," said Lissie.

Harrington was pleasantly impressed by the big Dunkard and the air of wealth, but the sudden and dramatic change in Lissie's fortunes roused questions in his mind. Was this wealth genuine, or was it a mere appearance? If genuine, whence did it so suddenly spring? But he did not carry his questions on his shoulder and no one was offended. Mrs. Blake could not go with them, but she came out to the gate to receive her impression also of the Dunkard, and Lissie's pretty clothes.

Upon his return to the house the editor made a mental note of the license number of the car, and wrote inquiring about its ownership to Springfield.

"If that's a rented car the license will show it. My guess is that it's rented. If it is, there must be a reason. I wonder what they're up to?"

But the car was owned, not rented. The license had been issued, he was told, to David Bellew of Chicago. He was not told that Bellew's chauffeur, a man known as Lush in some circles and as Gus in others, had lent Breaker the Bellew license-plate for a few hours in exchange for the plate on the rented machine, in view of just such inquiries.

LISSIE and Breaker followed this visit to Eden Center with others. Always they called upon Harrington and Mrs. Blake, and always in the evening. These were the only persons in Eden Center whom they saw, except Baldy, who, as "Mr. Matters" the coffee merchant, might have known Bellew, and once, when Breaker had a paper to sign, a notary public with whom Baldy had become acquainted.

Harrington's instinct to use his eyes for himself almost brought him into serious conflict with the Bellews upon one of these visits. Breaker, it seems, had neglected to sign a will that his attorney had prepared, and had telephoned to Baldy from Weston asking to have a notary public and two witnesses at his store at nine

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It was as he stood thus before the display of cameras in the window, apparently looking at the fast anastigmat, but in reality watching the changing image upon the plate glass, that a surprising thing occurred.

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o'clock. He and Mrs. Bellew would be along in the course of half an hour.

Among the ideas Baldy had brought with him was the whim to have a long standing desk such as bookkeepers use, placed in his private office, with the light falling upon it from behind, that is to say, from the store proper, through the frosted-glass partition. The office was very small even when it was empty. By the time space was taken up for this long, high, sloping desk, and for the safe and a battery of filing cabinets and some sectional bookcases, there was no room left, or very little, for its owner.

"You'll have to step in one at a time," said Baldy humorously. "Leave the door open for your elbow."

"I write a large hand," said Breaker.

"You'll write a small hand this time."

Breaker entered the office, carrying in his hand the will to be signed. Baldy and Lissie, who were sharp-eyed in such matters, saw the shiver of his right elbow as he made a lightning-like substitution at the desk. They knew that in that one swift movement he had withdrawn the already signed document from beneath a file of correspondence and had slipped the other underneath in its place. Then they saw him ostentatiously dip ink and pretend to sign Bellew's name.

"I don't think Mr. Bellew ought to ask us to witness that signature," remarked Harrington gravely. "We didn't see him write it. We only saw his back."

The remark was not seriously intended; he did not mean to question the signing, but merely to fling a humorous jibe at the coffee merchant's too cramped office space.

But its effect was that of flame against cotton. Even while he was yet speaking, Breaker's face flushed darkly and his eyes narrowed with anger. For a moment his scorn seemed such that he must refuse to remain in the same room with such a worm. And not only Breaker; Lissie also. The wrath in her eyes was like nothing so much as that of the old Lissie at the trial. The effect was out of all proportion to the cause.

Later, Harrington remembered another odd circumstance, which was that Baldy betrayed almost as much anger toward him as Lissie or Breaker.

"Why, what's the matter? You surely didn't misunderstand my poor remark."

"I will witness your signature," said Baldy coldly.

"I will myself," said Harrington.

"All of us will witness it," said the notary.

"Sure. All of us will witness it."

But in the end only the editor and Mrs. Blake signed as witnesses, the notary then attesting to the whole. The party broke up after a little, Lissie and her husband driving on toward Muldoon.

They did not again visit Eden Center.

IV

HARRINGTON'S first serious mistrust of Lissie and Breaker was ignited by a spark from their anger upon that mild August night. Why should they have lost their tempers like that?

"It's the truth makes people angry, not lies," he reflected.

But the doubt did not endure. He wrapped up the incident mentally and thrust it into a pigeonhole to be forgotten.

Baldy sold only teas and coffees, and of these only limited quantities of the David Bellew brand, yet during the year he had been able to put money into a new store building. Nor did he stop here; through his friend, the old notary, who was secretary of the company, he had bought from Ezra White a controlling interest in the Eden Center Creamery and was now its president. He had become an important man in the town.

Had Harrington been suspicious of Baldy he would have followed his rise in Eden Center with greater closeness. Certainly he would have delved deeper into the causes of the creamery strike.

The editor had heard that the strike impended the day before it took place, through Jim Burroughs, a driver.

"It's like I tell you," Jim had said. "Not more dough, and not shorter hours, though we ought to have them at that. We don't want to strike. But when the boss nails up that notice, what can you do?"

"You say he applied it to everybody?"

"All except three or four. I got nicked for five bucks."

"Five a month?"

"A week. All the drivers got nicked five a week."

"What's the idea?"

"Search me. Orders from Mr. Matters, the boss says. Reducing expenses, he says."

"I think I'll have a word with Matters. I'd like to know more about this cut in wages."

"I'd like a word with him myself—a word across his thin lips with my knuckles."

HARRINGTON had his talk with the hairless president, but learned nothing about the strike he did not already know. The cut in wages had been definitely decided upon and would stand. The reasons were business ones. Baldy supposed that some of the men would quit. If they did, the creamery would hire others. He hoped there would be no violence, but if there were, the creamery would prosecute the offenders to the limit of the law.

"I will guarantee our customers against outrages," he stated, speaking with great positiveness.

"Now, why did he say that?" Harrington asked himself.

But he did not follow up the question, which perhaps would not have led him anywhere anyhow at this time, and returned to his office without a suspicion that Baldy was not all he seemed.

It required an incident of the Thursday following to cause him to use his microscope upon that busy bee.

Mrs. Blake's house stood in a half-block upon the north side of Main Street at the edge of the town. It had been built facing east. A few feet beyond her front gate the street, now a country road, turned slightly to the left, ran down the hill a little distance to a bridge, beyond the bridge climbed another little hill, and then straightened out into the Emerson highway past the creamery. The bridge crossed a small stream just above its expansion into an irregular marsh.

Harrington had long intended taking a daybreak picture of this marsh. He had already photographed it many times in many seasons and many lights, but none of these pictures quite pleased him. What he needed, he thought, was the light of earliest morning. The marsh was an interesting tangle of reeds and cattails, grasses, parsnips and duckweed, with here and there the gleam of still water. Touch these parsnips and these cattails with early light, show the reflections of white morning in the dew upon the grasses, perhaps catch a frosted cobweb before the sun's first faint reflections in the delicate east had disentangled themselves from its fragile meshes, and the picture would be his.

On this cool August morning he had risen before day and with tripod in hand and camera on its strap set out to look for beauty. The town was asleep; not even the kitchen windows of Charley Kane, who liked to leave for his livery-stable before the sparrows became too noisy, were lighted.

He passed his printing-office and the bank and the Matters coffee store and the Congregational church and approached the end of Main Street. The darkness that was not darkness was beginning to grow visibly lighter, so that he could almost see Mrs. Blake's house on the left, and when he came to the turn in the road, almost see the bridge over the creek, and the marsh and the willows behind. Yet he could not surely see any of these. Still less could he see the road that led over and past them. The day was too young for that.

But, though he could not see the road, he was able to see something of more interest. At a point about midway in the black marsh, a flicker of flame suddenly shot forth, tiny but brilliant, as if from the scratching of a match. The flame remained stationary for a moment, then described an arc into the darkness at one side. The faint, dull point remaining might have been the lighted coal of a cigar.

Harrington stopped and tried to peer into the darkness ahead, partly startled, partly curious. His mind accounted for the light he had seen; he knew that men lit their cigars with matches, and that sometimes they traveled lonely roads at lonely hours. He himself was doing the one at this moment. The creek and the bridge, the road and the marsh and the willows were much, the cigar nothing.

But as he stood peering ahead into the depression he noticed a further fact that was less readily explained. He could see the point of coal from the cigar, but he could see also that it was not moving. The man who had lighted his cigar was standing still.

WHY was he standing there upon that marsh road? And why so early? Who in all Eden Center would have occasion to seek out such a blind vista at such an hour?

Meanwhile the day had been growing lighter, so that the darkness was taking the form of shadows, and the shadows of contours. He almost became able to see faintly the lines of the road.

The point of light below began to move forward, and he knew that the man with the cigar was crossing the bridge toward him. Soon he would begin climbing the little hill. They would meet, exchange commonplace greetings, and then Harrington would tear himself away and hasten down to the marsh for his photograph. While he would undoubtedly be in time to catch the light he was seeking, he preferred not to meet any one.

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The nearest concealment was a cluster of lilac bushes just inside Mrs. Blake's front gate. Crossing to the gate he quietly opened it, and slipped inside until the other should have passed.

His bewilderment began when the man of the cigar—by now he had thrown it away—arrived in front of this gate. For instead of passing up the street he, too, softly opened the gate and admitted himself into Mrs. Blake's front yard. Harrington could see his outlines very plainly. He seemed to be distributing milk; at least, he was carrying in each hand a bottle such as dairymen use. Although both bottles seemed to be filled, one of them, the nearer right-hand one, looked darker as if it contained water instead of milk.

The light was not strong enough to light up the features of the stranger; but even if it had been, he had pulled his hat down over his eyes so as to shade his face. It was this fact, and his manner of walking, that enabled Harrington to recognize him. For a man whose head is completely bald can not change his appearance by tilting his hat over his eyes. The editor knew him for Matters, president of the creamery company.

"Funny way to deliver milk," thought Harrington.

But not only was it a funny way in which to deliver milk, but the creamery man's actions of themselves were of the oddest. Granted that a creamery president would himself become a strike-breaker and deliver milk on foot at bare daybreak, why should he slip through his customer's front gate like a thief? Why should he sneak forward like a cat stalking a robin? Why should he not boldly enter with the milk, and as boldly set it down against the kitchen door?

Harrington thought it might be worth while to find out.

Mrs. Blake drew her supply of water from a well at the side of the house near the kitchen door. This well the creamery man was obliged to pass. At the corner of the house nearest the well, and between it and the street, stood a cluster of scarlet haws. The bald-headed merchant stood in its shelter for a moment before passing on. Harrington arrived in the shelter of the same clump of bushes in time to see the coffee-dealer empty the contents of one of his bottles into the pump. The action could not have been seen from the house, even had any one been awake to observe it.

"WHY did he do that, now?" he asked himself.

Furthermore, when the man walked on he carried the empty bottle with him, and when he came away after stealthily climbing the four yielding steps to the kitchen entrance and setting his bottle of milk beside the door, he still carried it with him. Why did he do that?

The movements of the creamery president had been so dark-mannered, and his actions so odd, that Harrington followed him to the gate. He followed him further; through the gate, and with his eyes at least, as was now possible in the better light, down the hill and over the bridge.

Baldy this time did not stop to light a cigar, but at once clambered down along the concrete abutment. Harrington by now could see him clearly. He made his way through the weeds and grass to the water's edge, and then leaning over the stream, filled his empty bottle and sank it. He next very thoroughly washed his hands, as if touching the bottle had soiled them. After that he climbed to the road, where after looking carefully around him he set out up the hill. He passed Harrington's clump of bushes with the growing light of morning all but full in his face.

Harrington's first act upon returning to his house—for by now all thought of taking pictures had fled—was to call up Dr. Kenwood. "An emergency matter," he said. "Come quickly." Not a great while later he had explained to the physician what he had seen. Dr. Kenwood himself warned Mrs. Blake; he was able to get possession of the suspected milk, and of a pint or so of water from the pump before she had begun her breakfast. Later, he made a tentative examination of a few drops of each in the editor's presence.

"That milk is lousy with bacilli. Typhoid, some of it. The water, too. We'll keep this thing strictly quiet. Mrs. Blake doesn't know the whole of it, but she understands that her milk is infected and that she is to say nothing. What do you suppose was the man's object?"

"It looks like a development of the strike. Must be some sort of a frame-up."

"Pretty hard on the innocent consumer."

"The man ought to be hanged."

But later on, thinking back over his acquaintance with the coffee man, he remembered his cramped office space and the awkward signing of the will, with the burst of anger following, and another possible motive flashed upon him—a motive that involved not only Baldy, but also Lissie and Breaker.

What if Lissie's husband were not David Bellew at all, but had stolen David Bellew's name? For he had recently learned that the David Bellew of the Chicago coffee trade was many times a millionaire.

That evening he wrote a trap letter to Lissie, telling her that Mrs. Blake was seriously ill. He referred in the letter to Lissie's marriage in the Blake home, to his own witnessing of the wedding with Mrs. Blake, and to the later pleasant visits to Eden Center of Lissie and Mr. Bellew in their Dunkard. He also referred apologetically to the signing of the will in the Matters coffee store. He worded the whole in such a manner that if his suspicion proved to be baseless, Lissie would never know it had been entertained, but if not, immediate fires would be lighted.

This letter he addressed to David Bellew at his Chicago offices, the street and number being taken from a package of coffee in the display window of Matthew Matters. In reply he received a midnight call from David Bellew's attorney.

V

WHICH brings me back to Harrington's visit to the dark basement to see the French lens, his recognition of Breaker, and the attack upon him from behind.

Breaker was in luck all around. The missile upon the wrist had quite disabled his arm; his companion had acted upon too small a margin; yet he had come off scot-free.

The man whose tale of a French lens had sent Harrington looking for a tailor did not have time to follow up his blow; still less was he able to make sure that the editor was dead. For even before he struck he had heard footsteps on the stairway outside.

"Beat it, Breaker!" he cried, darting upon the papers in Harrington's pocket.

Breaker crossed swiftly to the rear door, already ajar, and ran. He did not wait for the other, though he did hear him close and lock the door to delay pursuit. He made his way precipitously up the dark steps and out into the alley. A moment later he was lost like snow in water among the crowds of the street.

HE REACHED his flat without being followed. Whoever the newcomer might have been, and whatever his horror upon finding Harrington's body, he had not hit upon the path of escape in time to stop him. No one saw him leave the alley, and no one was watching for him when he arrived at his own door. Of that he made sure before entering.

He found that Lush had not yet arrived.

"Hello," cried Lissie. "Did Lush tell him? Did he bite? Did you follow through? Did he make trouble?"

"We cooked him brown, but we had to beat it the next minute because we heard a guy coming."

"Are you sure?"

"Croaked deader than Judas."

Lissie's face lighted with pleasure, and the pleasure was not a pretty thing to behold.

"Fine!" she cried. "Fine! Now I can sleep. Now I can be happy again!"

"We could have got along without all this muss," growled Breaker.

"I hated him worse than I hate a snake. I hated them both!"

"That ain't a good reason."

"Yes, it is," said Lissie. "It is if I'm David Bellew's widow. Mr. Bellew is dead."

"Sure, he's dead."

"You ain't so dead. Can't you see it yet? Both of them know you pretty good. All they'd have to do is to spot you somewhere, and then what? You forgot all that. We chewed that out long time ago. What did he say when he saw you? Didn't he know you?"

"We could have gone off some place."

"You could, but not me. Besides, you wouldn't go. You were afraid we'd hold out on you."

"You would, too!"

"You poor shrimp!"

The controversy was brought to an abrupt close by the ringing of a door-bell. Something about the touch upon the button and the length of the peal caused Lissie and Breaker to seek each other's eyes.

"See if anybody's outside," said Breaker.

Lissie slipped over to the window, where she peered out from behind the loose curtains.

"Two wagons," she announced.

Meanwhile Breaker had run through into the kitchen to see if the rear exit was blocked. "All off back here. Dicks everywhere."

"They've got Lush," said Lissie. "Good night."

"We're it. Open the door for them, old girl. We can't do no good by fighting."

"Good night!" said Lissie.

Harrington was lying with his head

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wrapped in bandages in a room in Mercy Hospital. Beside the bed sat the attorney who lived on Sheridan Road. Dr. Kenwood of Eden Center was also in the room.

"You say this man who called himself David Bellew was about to strike you from behind with a knife, but just then you turned, and he didn't? How do you know he didn't?"

"He couldn't because I threw my camera into him and sent his knife somersaulting. There must have been somebody else."

"But you saw no one else?"

"I remember that my man had his eyes on something behind me. I thought his eyes were out of focus, but I guess they weren't. I guess they were only stopped down a little. What I can't understand is, why did they quit on me so soon? How do I happen to be here instead of in the morgue?"

"Scared away," said Brett.

"What makes you think so?"

"Oh, I happen to know, because it was my man scared them. I've had you under my protection for some time. What made you go down in that dark basement? If you had stayed out of that hole you would never have been touched."

"A MAN told me a tailor down there had a whopping big lens."

"A lens! I see. You do pictures."

"He told me a whopping big lie."

"You came off pretty well, but you mustn't talk too much," Dr. Kenwood warned him.

"He'll have to identify them, doctor."

"I think we can allow him that pleasure, Mr. Brett. How soon?"

"Right away. I'll send down for them. I think we have them all, counting your typhoid man, who just arrived."

Harrington saw the attorney pass out, and a little later heard the shuffle of feet in the hall. Breaker and Lissie entered first, followed by Lush, with Baldy following him.

"Good morning, Lissie," said Harrington.

"DO YOU know these people?" asked Brett.

"This man is the fellow who sent me into the basement; I don't know him by name. These others I know well. The bald-headed man goes by the name of Matthew Matters in my town. He's the man who tried to murder Mrs. Blake."

"The charge is absurd," said Baldy with dignity.

"This other old-looking man is the man who married Lissie Peters."

"He is not!" cried Lissie. "I never saw him until the day before yesterday. David Bellew married me."

"Not the Chicago David Bellew?" The attorney's voice was courteous.

"Yes sir, the coffee merchant."

"The David Bellew who lives on the Drive? That Bellew?"

"Yes, sir. I'm Mrs. David Bellew; David Bellew's widow."

"I don't see how that can be possible," remarked Brett. "Mr. Bellew was unmarried."

"I have the document to prove it!"

"What if Mr. Bellew denied the marriage?"

"He is dead."

"Before his death, let us say!"

"I tell you I have the documents."

"Even so, did you know that in his will Mr. Bellew made provision for his widow, if one should appear? That he left her ten dollars?"

"He left his property to me. He made another will."

"I doubt if he signed such a will."

"You can doubt it, and doubt it. He signed it before a notary public and witnesses."

"You speak of a marriage. Is this marriage——"

"What was I arrested for? That's what I want to know."

"Well," said Brett, "I'll tell you. You were not arrested for pretending to be a widow, because anybody has a right to pretend that. You were arrested for trying to get money as David Bellew's widow when you are not."

"You might show me," said Lissie sarcastically.

"Why you are not his widow? For the very good reason that David Bellew is not yet dead. You were doubtless misled by a newspaper article that appeared a week or so ago. I gave out the news of his death so that you would be. The amount involved was so large we couldn't afford to take chances. You see, some of his own servants were involved. His chauffeur here. You yourself had been a servant in his house. He didn't know whom to trust. Now he knows more about you."

"Mr. Bellew ain't dead?"

"He wasn't five minutes ago. In fact, he's waiting in the next room to have a look at this widow of his. Mr. Bellew is a very particular man."

"For the love of Pete!" cried Lissie.

A New Serial

by Samuel Merwin

MR. MERWIN'S position as a leader among the few foremost American masters of fiction lends special significance to the announcement that beginning in the September issue, *Everybody's* will publish serially "In Red and Gold: A Romance of the Greatest River", an intensely dramatic story that will rank with "The Hills of Han," "The Passionate Pilgrim," "Anthony the Absolute," "Temperamental Henry," and other of the author's successes.

The story goes back about ten years to the China of the old régime, a colorful setting that Mr. Merwin knows intimately as the result of his investigations some years ago into the opium traffic.

The swiftly moving adventure plot, interwoven with a beautiful love-story, involves a host of interesting characters, both native and white, who are assembled from a variety of motives on a steamer plying the Yangtze Kiang. All play active parts in a dramatic series of events centering about the doomed Viceroy's treasure, the romance of his charming daughter, Hui Fei, and the fortunes of American adventurers.

"In Red and Gold" is a story of sharp contrasts and exotic atmosphere, of thrilling action and subtle intrigue, of strong temptations and violent passions, of desperate chances and rich prizes, told with the warmth and enthusiasm of a master story-teller.

SAMUEL MERWIN

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One's first view of the prisoner might be in some stable or shed—a forlorn figure between two armed guards.

The Spy Web

By Ferdinand Tuohy

This is the third of a series of articles which unfold a picture of the dramatic underground of the war—the dark play of brain against brain, on royal thrones, in the chancelleries, in the great swarming cities, behind and across the lines and in the far-flung web of conflict, for that thing of supreme value in the struggle—information.

The first two articles told of the spies—men and women, rich and poor, high and low—who plied their perilous trade in the cities far from the battle-line as well as in the turmoil of the front.

The author after acting as war correspondent for the London *Daily Mail* in Belgium, France, Russia and Poland, 1914 to 1915, and serving in the British army in France from 1915 to 1917, was attached to the General Staff of the British army and proceeded on a tour of inspection to Palestine, Mesopotamia, Salonica and Italy—thus completing the entire circle of the world conflict.—The Editors.

III—THE HIDDEN EAR

I AM taking you in this chapter far away from pretty ladies and secret inks and American bars up into the throbbing war, the true domain of "Intelligence," where such a battle of wits, such a brain war was fought out by embittered opponents as must have made, if there be a beyond, Marlborough, Bonaparte and Moltke get together and chuckle over large-scale maps.

Napoleon it was who argued that the art of war was to know who was on the other side of the hill. The spy and the scout were his standbys, but of these forerunners of "Intelligence" the latter passed forever in France with the death of Bertram Stewart at Bailleul in October, 1914. In his stead, a silent sentinel arose, ever watchful, ever listening, ever reasoning—the Intelligence officer. His work was clear cut—to protect the British army from sudden, unprepared-for blows and to tell the British army where it could attack and when, with maximum chances of success and minimum of loss. The complete Intelligence officer lived, in mind, if not in body, behind the enemy's lines. And if he failed at times in his task of following the Germans' every move and contemplated move, you will appreciate that he was a learner—a learner to the bitter end in a game that had never been played before, and which assumed new fantasies with each cycle of the sun.

We went to Mons cheerfully, airily, not knowing what on earth was going to happen. A "rubberneck" lorry was provided for G. H. Q., the idea being that Sir John French's staff should sit side by side in rows, like boys at school, and be whisked about the country in accordance with the trend of events. "Operations" in the

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front seats, "Intelligence" a little higher up in the row behind.

That was the beginning. Before the last shell fell Intelligence officers, let alone the General Staff, could not have been accommodated in fifty rubberneck lorries.

A monstrous conflict of human nimbleness of mind had developed in the years between in France and Flanders. The checking of airplane reconnaissance reports, observation and photography, the examination of prisoners and documents; the "vetting" of agents' reports, the identification of the enemy's dead and the overhearing of his signal traffic—such were the salient features of this brain war unique in military history.

Airplane observation of the enemy consisted of a tactical surveillance on one's immediate front of such things as campfires and smoke, road movement and the number of lorries in transport parks, and of a strategical reconnaissance further afield for checking railway activity and canal movement and the location of dumps and aerodromes. The essential in weighing information derived from airplane reconnaissance was to have by one, always, a record of normal happenings, since only by consulting the normal could one detect the abnormal and then check it, accept or reject it.

A Fake and Its Sequel

BUT even with the most complete record of the normal at one's elbow, arriving at conclusions was not always "plain sailing." For example, the noting of enemy railway activity was always of vital importance. Toward the end the opposing armies carried out train movement almost entirely by night — but earlier, at Loos and the Somme, the wisdom of such a precaution had not yet pierced the brains of our leaders of men. Rail traffic would be run backward and forward under the very eyes of a hostile observer, who would proceed to note the location of each train with the time and the direction in which it was proceeding.

On the second day of Loos, our aerial observers reported train upon train steaming up to the line, then, after a stop in some station or other, heading east once more. Great enemy rail activity. Dozens of German trains. Clearly reenforcements were being brought up on a large scale. Each train held eight hundred men or roughly a battalion. Intelligence worked it all out: Twenty-five trains; twenty-five times eight hundred men; the enemy was reenforcing his line to the extent of at least one fresh division. We must remold our plans accordingly.

We did. And how the German General Staff must have had the laugh on us that September night! For those twenty-five German trains were all empty! We learned it all afterward. Having insufficient troops ready to repel our offensive, the Germans had lit upon the idea of faking rail activity on a grand scale, knowing our aerial observers would report it, and reckoning that our Intelligence would be deceived by it. It was the first piece of real camouflage in the war, and it succeeded beyond all expectation.

There came a sequel to it, two years after, at General Byng's November battle for Cambrai. On the day after the Third Army had broken through, our observers, both ground and aerial, reported very great enemy road activity behind the German line. Hundreds upon hundreds of lorries. All day the procession went on. Clearly tens of thousands of fresh troops were being moved up into close reserve. But whence? All our information had gone to show that the enemy had no fresh divisions immediately available at the moment we had chosen to attack him. Still, here was the fact, in black and white.

A certain headquarters rang up the pundits behind for advice. "Carry on," came the answer. "The Huns did this trick on us before at Loos. Those lorries are all empty." They were not empty!

The second phase of Intelligence work in the field was ground observation. In the stationary warfare that endured for four years on the western front, Germany was incessantly observing Briton, and Briton, German. Each battalion in line had a special observation officer and in turn the latter had two or three receptive and reliable men under him for the sole purpose of watching the enemy battalion opposite. An observation officer reported every single thing that happened within his range of vision.

Every motor-car or lorry seen—each little column of smoke from dugout or cottage—time and place—the location of supposed trench mortar and machine-gun emplacements, hostile aerial and artillery activity, German officers and men seen moving about in the trenches opposite, light railways active, working parties—time and place—and other intelligence such as *"White dog seen running from Hindenburg Farm to Kluck cottage."* *"German with black beard waved his hand across at* 2.30 P.M." *"Civilian seen putting out laundry to dry at Verlorenhoek crossroads* 10.15 A.M." *"Two bicylists riding hard toward Monchy* 11 A.M. *One got off, spoke to a lorry-driver, then rode on again."* And by night these lynx-eyed watchers crept out into "no man's land" and continued their vigil, noting the state of the enemy's wire, etc. The Germans were doing the same. Sometimes opposing parties found themselves staring through the night at one another in the long grass.

Identifying the Enemy

IMPORTANT as are an enemy's acts, his identity is even more so. This was unforgettably demonstrated on a fateful day in 1914—October twenty-fourth—when two cyclists of the 215th German regiment were taken prisoners near Dixmude. This capture showed that no less than six German Army corps were in existence of which nothing whatever was known by the Allies. The cyclists were able to say that the German Army had been increased from Regiment No. 201 to No. 270, and three days later this was proved to be correct when no fewer than four of the new corps, the twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh, wheeled down from Bruges under the Duke of Wurtemberg. No fewer than a quarter of a million new men came down on our thin left flank just as we were believing that we could outflank the enemy. The astonishing discovery brought Lord Kitchener post-haste over to Cassel, where at a memorable interview Foch decided the Ypres salient must be held at any cost. Ever after that little shock it became the prime duty of Intelligence to find out who was "in front."

The surest method of identifying the enemy was "by contact," that is to say, either by bringing in dead men or by taking prisoners. The object of most of those costly night raids which we used to carry out in between battles and which would so exasperate an unenlightened public, was to obtain such "contact" identifications. On a dead man being brought in by our patrols, his identity disk would first be removed. This was the surest guide to the man's identity and regiment. Next, the shoulder-strap bearing a number or monogram would be cut off the victim's tunic or great-coat and the marking on arms, clothing and equipment noted down. Finally, the dead man's pay-book, and all maps, letters, diaries, post-cards, notebooks, etc., found upon him would be removed and the whole collection bundled up and forwarded to Divisional Headquarters.

Often has one had to spend hours over such a gruesome collection; letters and clothing still soaked in blood and mud. Documents official and private were always a valuable source of information. The German was a great correspondent and usually carried on his person letters and post-cards from dozens of comrades in other divisions and corps.

The Importance of Post-Cards

IT WAS, incidentally, the capture of such a personal document, a post-card, that gave Marshal Foch the first intimation that the Germans were going to attack in May, 1918, on the Chemin des Dames. The Germans, by all manner of up-to-date camouflage and deceit, had concealed their local intentions absolutely up to May twenty-fifth. On that day we captured a German on the Lys among whose belongings was found a post-card dated a day or two before from Laon—the main town behind the Chemin des Dames sector. The writer of this post-card stated in veiled language that the Germans were going to attack on the Chemin des Dames. On its purport being communicated post-haste to French headquarters at Compiègne, every effort was made by Marshal Pétain to assemble reserves in the threatened area, and much was actually done in the succeeding hours, if not to ward off the break through that followed, at least to allow for its immediate consequences.

An illuminating commentary on modern war, this post-card! What might have happened to France and to the Allies and to the world, had it never been taken on the Lys that night in May?

Not that the fate of empires hinged on every captured document. Sometimes during big operations, as many as fifty sacks a day of letters and post-cards and diaries and notes had to be laboriously pored over by scores of officers, when perhaps less than ten per cent. would be put aside as of any real value. The address of sender and recipient had always to be noted together with postmarks. Some of the documents took the form of trench poetry. I have one before me as I write beginning *"Mondklare Sternennacht."* Others were replete with molten love passages. Others again told of internal conditions in Germany. Then there were quantities of photographs—to come across a pre-war photograph of family bliss, of mother or wife or children or sweetheart now perforated by the bullet that killed the one who treasured it, was no great rarity.

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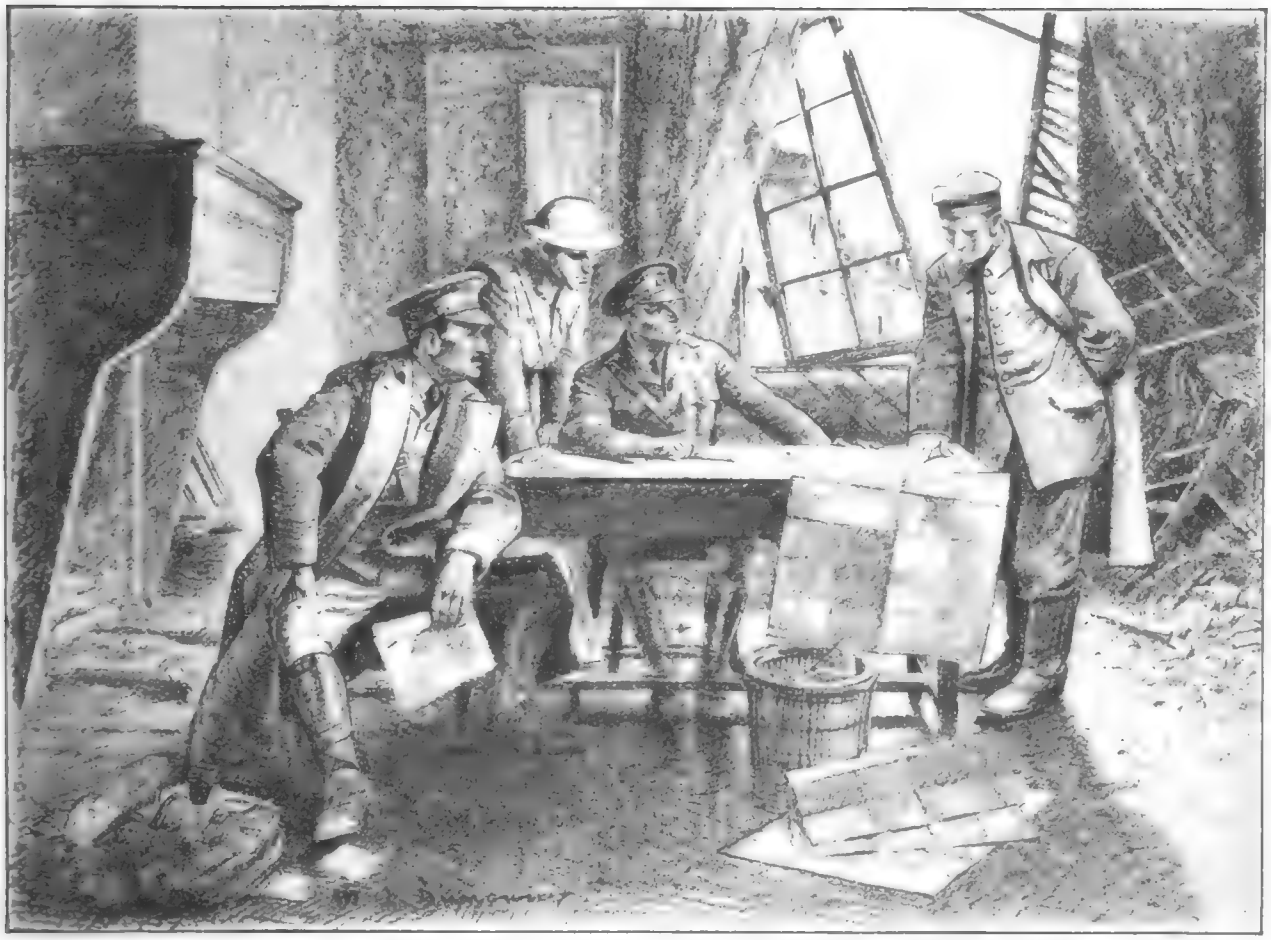

Allied Intelligence "pumped" double as much information out of German captives as ever the enemy did out of French or British or American prisoners.

A depressing enough business it was at times going through such belongings in which a dead man lived again before you in photographs and letters—photographs and letters of those dear to him. The dead man seemed to lose type and nationality. He ceased to be a "Hun"—he was just a dead man.

The Paper War

NECESSARILY, Intelligence work in the field led to a mighty "paper war." All information, as obtained or deduced, had to be passed on to the troops in front in cut-and-dried form, principally by means of charts, maps, diagrams and summaries—the latter famed far and wide as "Comic Cuts." They certainly were comical enough at times. I have an extract from one before me:

Yesterday was quiet on the Corps front. The enemy's infantry were shelled on several occasions when attempting to mass. SHELL TRAP FARM has been demolished by our artillery, also BELLEWAARDE FARM. Germans were seen running from trenches near BELLEWAARDE and our gunners made good practise on them.

This produced the following rejoinder from an irate infantry colonel the same evening:

While whizzbangs and sausages go screaming overhead
And German hordes advance against our line,
Our staff officers are lying so comfortably in bed
And spend their time in sniping pheasant fine.
"Why worry?" is their motto, and their reason is so blunt,
As "Everything is quiet on the Sixth Corps' front."
While all of us are suffering from a thirst we can not quench,
And men are rushing backward in a rout,
And Cavalry are screaming, "There's a bomb right in our trench,
Please, Infantry, do come and take it out."
Our gilded staff rely on this really ripping stunt,
"Oh, everything is quiet on the Sixth Corps' front."

On another occasion when a commanding officer was asked to report on the attitude of the enemy in his specific sector, there came the reply: "*The attitude of the enemy in my sector continues to be distinctly hostile.*"

Artillery intelligence, the location of enemy batteries, their movements and grouping, formed a branch of Intelligence work apart, that swelled in importance from insignificant beginnings.

To visit a French artillery headquarters, in which red tape had been cut to pieces, was to appreciate why French staff work came to be recognized as the most efficient in the field. A German battery would "start up." The essence of artillery fire being successful counter-battery work, it behooved the French to engage the offending battery with the least possible delay. But which battery was firing? There were hundreds of all calibers located opposite.

Reports would soon come streaming into headquarters concerning the active battery. First of all the infantry would ring up to say that they were being "crumped from somewhere over by Belleau." Next, an observer in an artillery machine, patrolling the German lines, would wireless down: "Battery firing at 44, 36"—this being a map reference. A message from an observation balloon might or might not confirm this, after which an officer would telephone through his flash spotting deductions as to the location of the active Hun battery.

Then came the sound-rangers' report, saying, for the sake of argument, that a hostile battery was firing at 44, 38. Necessarily, the sound-rangers could not concentrate on batteries when much fire was going on. They were also much subject to atmospheric and soil conditions. On wet, heavy days their results were often poor. They never could function properly in hilly country such as Kemmel, with its echoes, whereas the clay soil of Arras was splendidly adapted to their work. It is recorded that on our advancing over the German artillery positions at Arras in April, 1917, our sound-ranging locations of hostile batteries were found to have been correct to fifty yards in eighty-seven per cent. of cases.

A Human Sound-Ranger

MENTION of the sound-rangers puts one in mind of a very modern *vivandière*.

There lived in a wine-shop in the narrow, hilly, main street of Arras a young French girl who by virtue of possessing a sensitive ear and by constant residence within sound of the guns, came to develop into a veritable human sound-ranging apparatus. In her wine-shop she would tell the position of most of the chief German batteries that shelled Arras simply on hearing them

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fire off. She was, in fact, the finest counter-battery proposition on a limited scale ever evolved. You would be sitting after dinner sipping a "fine" when suddenly a German battery would "pop off." Almost simultaneously with the whirr of the shell overhead, mademoiselle would say: "That's the one hundred and fifty millimeter at Neuville." Or else, "That's a new one. I've not heard that before." She could even distinguish the various calibers. Once, as a test, we compared her locations of batteries, as spoken overnight, with the official list of "batteries active" as issued in the morning. Mademoiselle was right every time.

Although many gunners are reported to have acted strictly unofficially on mademoiselle's "locations," and a statement of her case once permeated through to Corps Headquarters under the heading "Discovery of a sound-ranging girl," the General Staff did *not* develop the notion of the human sound-ranger!

"Pumping" the Prisoners

THE most important, and certainly the most interesting of all branches of Intelligence work in the field was the cross-examinations of prisoners of war. British Intelligence officers in France must have examined in all between two and three hundred thousand captured Germans of every rank from colonel down to private. The Hague Conference laid it down that a prisoner of war might refuse all information save his name and regiment. Such a fiat can and always will be circumvented. In point of fact, millions of questions were put to German prisoners and millions of questions were answered.

The average German, in this respect, was a curious mixture. He wasn't unintelligent, he was deeply patriotic and yet—he talked, usually for the sheer love of showing that he knew a thing or two. It is safe to say that the Allied Intelligence "pumped" double as much information out of German captives as ever the enemy did out of French or British prisoners. Captured German documents repeatedly bore witness to this, such phrases occurring as: "The French refuse to speak. The British appear to know nothing."

In this business of examining prisoners one was confronted by national types and characteristics. The captured Frenchman, intelligent, knowing more of what went on around him than any other private soldier in the war, refused to talk out of white-hot love of France—just of that intangible thing, France—and hatred of the befouler of his soil.

The average British soldier, on the other hand—and I am not talking here of overseas troops who are of a still different type—frankly took not the slightest interest in the war except as it affected his interior, his comfort and leave. He may have groused freely to his German interrogator, but answer really important questions he couldn't and, one is sure, wouldn't, had he been able to.

As a test case, I once sat down opposite a British soldier, and having explained my motive in questioning him, put him through the accepted catechism of questions as if I had been a German officer—only with this reservation, that my victim was to answer every question put, to the best of his knowledge. For all the practical use that cross-examination was, a report of it might almost have been rifle-grenaded across there and then into the German line opposite.

Still, one generalizes. There were cases, naturally, where British soldiers gave information away, as we got to know subsequently from captured German documents. There were even cases where British soldiers were strongly suspected of having deserted to the enemy lines and then given information. The names of several such offenders are to-day in the possession of the General Staff and it would be interesting to know if the military authorities have ever taken the dire action they threatened, on the return of the culprits from captivity in Germany.

A singular lack of imagination was exhibited by both sides in counteracting this giving away of information by captured men. The German officers told their men: "*The British kill their prisoners whether they give any information or not. So don't say anything.*" The British, until quite late in the war, took no action in the matter at all. Then we circulated a characteristic warning: "*The enemy may threaten you if you refuse to speak, but it will be all bluff. In reality the Germans admire a man who refuses to betray his country or his comrades.*" Another warning ran: "*When captured, don't discuss the war or military happenings with anybody—even if they are dressed in British uniform. They may be German Intelligence officers masquerading in khaki.*" A third reminder said: "*Don't discuss military happenings when captured, even with your own comrades taken prisoners with you. The enemy may be overhearing you on listening sets. In fact, when captured, discuss the weather.*"

However, one very rarely discussed the weather with German prisoners. Rather was this the kind of thing one concentrated on: "To what regiment do you belong? What line does your regiment hold? What are the regiments on the left and right of your regiment? What troops are in support? What troops are in reserve?" and so forth.

The Prisoner's Cage

THE method employed in examining a prisoner depended largely on circumstances. In big operations, when prisoners would be caged by the thousand, and information had to be got through to headquarters at top speed, one had little opportunity for "frilling." The more intelligent prisoners would be put on one side for further treatment, the remainder—ninety per cent. of them perhaps—would all be herded together, care being taken never to send an examined man back to a group of unexamined men lest he should forewarn the latter of the questions being asked.

In all the rush and bustle of a full cage, an Intelligence officer had to keep a clear head on his shoulders. Besides feeding the staff behind, he had to feed the fighting troops forward by supplying them with such tactical information as the position of saps and mines and obstacles, the location of rest billets and the distribution of machine guns and other ghastly engines of trench warfare. The strength in which the opposing trenches were being held, the disposition in detail of enemy troops in a given sector, how the enemy proposed to carry on in the event of a retirement—all these points had to be put and reput to prisoners, the latter often shaken by battle, or dull-witted, or hostile or silent, according to plan.

It was hard work—almost amounting to that met with normally in civil life. In the middle of an intimate examination, one would extract a piece of information of vital value to a neighboring corps or division or even to the French or Belgians. It had to be wired off at once. Or else a freshly captured document of importance would be passed along with a note to the effect that every prisoner had to be cross-examined on it.

The Lie-Spotters

CRISSSCROSS currents like this were constantly disturbing the even tenor of things. To deal with the possibility of prisoners lying, officers had to be intimately versed not only in the organization and latter-day development of the German army, but in the German tactical and strategical situation so that a false statement could immediately be trumped. An examining officer had to be steeped in the German side of the war. He had to know which classes of recruits were then in the depots of Thorn. He had to know where the Sixth and Tenth or Twentieth Uhlans had last been in the line in France. He had to know all about the latest type of German gas-mask, how many machine guns went to an assault battalion, and what color shoulder-straps the Naval Corps wore.

If he didn't know these and similar things, a cunning prisoner could hoodwink him. On the other hand, if he knew his job, an examining officer could "vet" the information being given him almost as it left his prisoner's mouth. "That's not so," you would hear him say; "you're lying. It's impossible for you to have seen Tenth Corps troops at Ghent last Saturday. The Tenth Corps is in Russia." And nothing strengthened an Intelligence officer's hand more than this showing a prisoner that he was not telling the truth.

Information radiated from a prisoners' cage at a speed that would gladden the heart of the most exigent editor. One minute a prisoner would give the location of an ammunition dump, the next a wire was being despatched to the air forces asking them to go and bomb it. A prisoner would state that a friend of his, in such and such a regiment, was at Hirson. A quick glance at a file or map showed that the location of this regiment at Hirson was abnormal. Off went a wire to the French to that effect. A prisoner would state that his regiment, in the event of a retreat, was to hold the Gavrelle crossroads in force. Off went an urgent priority wire, to the brigade attacking in that sector, in the hope of saving dozens of British lives.

Conversely, messages would come streaming in from neighboring formations and from our allies: "*Prisoners taken by the French say Sixteenth Division is at Mons.*" Whereupon you would remember having spoken half an hour ago to a prisoner who had lately been in Mons, and you had to try to sort him out again from all that herd of scowling Germans squatting round.

Meanwhile a strange and singularly up-to-date drama—one might term it "the hidden ear"—was being continuously enacted. In order to hear what the Germans were saying among themselves and one to another, listening sets, by which the

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human voice can be heard at a considerable distance, would be installed around the cage. The leads of these listening sets might be placed sticking up out of the earth in the very center of the Germans, buried cables leading back to the listening operators outside the cage. It was a strange enough experience to stroll into such an operator's hut and see perhaps half a dozen men sitting there, telephone clasps glued to their ears, and then to wander across a few hundred yards of field to the prisoners' cage and there watch the prisoners chatting away, entirely ignorant that an unseen agency, the "hidden ear," was listening to every single syllable they uttered!

The "Pigeon"

OFTEN, when a bunch of prisoners were morose and silent and not saying anything worth listening to, a "pigeon" would be introduced in their midst. A pigeon was a renegade German or an Englishman speaking perfect German, dressed up in German uniform and introduced into an assembly of prisoners in order to "direct their conversation into the proper channel." The pigeon would proceed to talk of forthcoming operations, or of losses, or of good discipline or of anything else upon which he had been primed beforehand by the British Intelligence Staff. Then all the prisoners would start talking, complaining, grousing and the pigeon, ears wide open, and the listening operators without would have a busy half-hour.

But examinations carried out in the rush of battle were never so informative or so reliable as the *séance* prosecuted in detail and at one's ease. A cross-examination, too, became really interesting when one had the time to develop it into a battle of wits, a psychological struggle, oneself *versus* the prisoner. Necessarily much depended on the manner and method of questioning.

In 1915 one sat down opposite a prisoner, took out a sheaf of documents and then started, like a lawyer trying to get the truth from a prospective divorcée: "Now, my good man, where were you born? Who was your father?" etc., the examining officer noting down each reply as given. In other words, a futile system by which a prisoner, if he had any gumption at all, was put thoroughly on his guard.

Then, as the campaign drew out, "stunting" started. There was the examining officer who favored terrorism. This gentleman would come into the torture chamber, clamp down a couple of revolvers on the table, swill off a whisky and soda, scowl at his victim, and then start barking. This system rapidly fell into disuse. A conversational chat was to be aimed at, not direct examination. And no note-taking.

One of the surest methods of extracting information from a certain type of German was to treat him as a human being. Accustomed to being bullied and cursed by his own officers, he would be more or less dazed by any kindness shown him. One had to choose one's men carefully for this form of "treatment." He had to be a simple, sentimental, friendly soul.

One's first view of the prisoner might be in some stable or shed, a forlorn figure between two armed guards, usually sharing their rations or tobacco with Fritz. Your offer of a cigaret and chair, coupled with a peremptory dismissal of the guard, would leave the prisoner quite "in the air." Then would follow a quiet conversational chat, in the course of which you often told him, perhaps, as much about the British, to draw him out, as he was telling you about the Germans. Comparisons were not at all odious here. They were often very useful. You would say: "We don't believe in holding the front line in strength as you do." To which the ever-boastful German might reply: "I am sure you've got more men forward than we have! One man about every dozen yards is all we need to keep you English in your proper place!"

One man per dozen yards of trench—quite useful information for our troops planning a raid in that sector!

Catching a "Live One"

SOMETIMES in certain areas many weeks might elapse without a single prisoner being brought in. Raids would be carried out specially to "catch a live one," but raiding parties were apt to see red on such occasions and as likely as not brought back no one at all—or at best "a dead 'un." When a prisoner was dearly wanted in a certain sector, the stage would be ludicrously enough set for his reception. He might have been an emissary from the other side! He would be conducted to a

(*Continued on page 94*)

The victim's letters and clothing, still soaked in blood and mud, were always a valuable source of information.

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Red Dapple

By Vingie E. Roe

This is a story of horses—wonderful wild, beautiful horses away down in the Southwest, and of a girl who knew them and loved them. If you have any feeling for horses at all, this story will thrill you. Vingie E. Roe lives in this world—lives mostly on horseback when she's not at her desk. Her next story for EVERYBODY'S will be "The Eighteenth Leap", a strange tale of the friendship between a man and a marvelous horse alone on an island.

THE Willasanna Plains have a history of their own. Fringed on the east by the glowing, arrested waves of the great Continental Divide, on the north by the Willasanna hills that swing west in majesty, they stretch south and southwest into infinitude. They are sweet with forage, watered by living springs, fanned by winds as soft as a woman's sighs, and they are strong with freedom, vital with their distances.

Once brown, courageous people rode their *pinto* ponies over them. Later Spaniards came and scanned them with proud eyes, and they rode steeds as proud.

The years passed, along with the Indian and the Spaniard, with turbulence and strife, staged like a play in the high-skied expanse, with long periods of silence and loneliness, when nothing ran the Willasanna Plains save scattered *pinto* ponies and here and there a beauty of a better blood.

The padres came and went again, for there were no souls to save thereon. More years drifted by and presently men came to the Willasanna country, bold men who set them up houses far and by in the majestic land, flat-topped houses made of the very land itself, deep-walled, deep-roomed, built round their *patios*, beside some living spring.

They planted trees in the level floor of the plains to hide their abodes, to make them cool and sweet with shade, set roses in beside the trickle of the springs, trained vines to hang heavy with grapes upon the wide adobe walls. They brought them cattle from the outer world to graze upon the exhaustless forage—and the first great *ranchos* were started.

So far apart were these holdings, so many uncharted acres did they claim, that none knew his neighbor in the lonesome land scarce more than by hearsay. So the years passed again, and the first hardy *rancheros* passed with them, but their blood was in the land.

And as it was, so was the blood of the *pintos*, of the proud steeds from Spain. Horses ran the Willasannas whose speed and beauty would have been marvels in the marts of the outer world, wild horses, free as the winds and almost as fleet. They lived without thought of man, secure in the largess of a land that fed them lavishly. And of these horses the owners of the *ranchos* took their pick. When the herds swept out from the cups of the hills in spring—those sheltering cups that guarded and fed them like kings throughout the winter—the ranchers rode for days picking out the young prize stock.

Then came the chases—those days of fear and agony when the younglings were expertly cut out from the rest and kept going without rest or water, driven by relays of men and horses until they dropped to be roped and tamed, or staggered, still up in their pride, into the trap stockade to be conquered.

A piteous thing was that—the conquering—for many of these wild things there were who would not tame, who died in the breaking-yard, their red mouths open and their big eyes glazing under the stubborn lids.

But what would you?

Men were impatient ever—and the horses of the plains were legion in those days.

And so there came a time when two things lived and bloomed in amazing perfection on the Willasanna Range—two young things, fiery, happy, vital, tossing their handsome heads in the arrogance of youth—and these two splendid creatures were Therise McFarland, daughter of John McFarland of the Palo Verdi Rancho, and Red Dapple, son of all the *pintos* and the Spanish prides that had run the smiling country from the old days.

How shall one describe the two?

The girl was a rose, a star, a sob in the night and a laugh in the windy sun, a little straight thing with cheeks like scarlet damask and lips of pomegranate. Her eyes were dark as the velvet of an altar cloth and as soft, yet they could flame like destroying fire. These she got from the Señora McFarland, her half Spanish mother. The cool, keen judgment that made her a wonder among men came from that successful and able man her father.

And the sweetness of her, the light of her eyes under their long lashes, the tremble of her lips at sight of suffering, the tender heart of her, the eager helping hand—ah, these she got direct from God.

AND to her feet these things drew all men, from the best of her father's riders to the Mexican *peons* who lived on his largess. The idol, the darling, the princess, she flashed about the *rancho* in a constant riot of joy that had its being in her inimitable youth and her health.

And Red Dapple?

The horse was a monster among a goodly breed.

Young—four years that spring—he stood two full hands above the biggest stallion that ran the ranges. This was Old Blackfoot, the scarred and seasoned sire of all the herds, the boss of the bands, into whose vicinity few of the younger horses cared to venture. Out of his own band the veteran drove all the young males as soon as they were grown, or killed them if they refused obedience. But all kings rise and fall.

In his fourth year Red Dapple killed Blackfoot in his first fight, tore out his throat with his own trick, and left him to die as the old monarch had left many another.

And Red Dapple was the king in his place.

A wondrous change had taken place in the young horse over the winter. Where he had gone into the hills in fall, rangy and rough-coated, he came out in spring sleek as satin and shining like fire, and the dark dapples that flawed his pale-red hide stood boldly out in amazing beauty.

He led Old Blackfoot's band—a hundred strong and more—and he was intolerant of the young males!

So he swept down along the western rim of the Willasanna range and looked upon the goodly world with new eyes, proud eyes of possession, that shone in his handsome face like stars.

AND as was very natural, a thing bound to happen, he was seen by more than one lone rider scanning the herds for stock.

To John McFarland came his foreman, Bent Subine, slow-spoken, tall, smiling with his dark eyes.

"John," he said solemnly, "there's a new king leadin' Ol' Blackfoot's band, an' all th' fire o' th' Spanish Prides is a-shinin' in his skin. He flames on th' green, I tell you."

The ranchman's eyes lighted quickly. "Fast?" he asked.

"Don't know. I didn't see him run. But you ain't never seen a hoss like him, John, fer beauty."

Now John McFarland had seen many horses, on the Willasannas and in those far and mysterious marts of the outside world which he visited once in every two years or so, for if there was one thing above another that fired him with consuming excitement it was horseflesh, *good* horseflesh, and "good" with him meant "fast."

Now he looked hard at his foreman. "Funny I ain't never seen this one, then," he said; "where d'you think he's come in from?"

"Don't think he's come in," answered Bent. "I think he's been here all along, but 's one of them wonder hosses that sometimes blossoms over a season. I've seen 'em before, an' so have you. Remember Bluestone?"

McFarland nodded.

"Sure do," he said. "It was a damn pity that beautiful mare was so stubborn. Never seen a horse killed in wranglin' that went into me like that, an' I've seen aplenty. But she wouldn't break—not if she'd a-lived to be a hundred."

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He shook his head and thought back five years to that small, marvelous epitome of all equine beauty, who would not "break" indeed, but died fighting with her pretty blue face to the stockade gate, a challenge to the last.

He had never quite forgotten her.

"I'll go take a look at this one," he said at last; "what's his color?"

"Th' palest red I ever saw, shot thick with dapples so dark they're almost black."

"Sounds good," said the rancher briefly, and he signed that moment a warrant for Red Dapple's capture in his own mind.

IT WAS twilight at Palo Verdi Rancho. Therise, her little feet tucked up beside her, swung in a hammock beneath the whispering cottonwoods—a perfect vanity of a hammock, fringed and ornamented with pounds of colored Indian beads, and made entirely from doeskin as soft and white as a lady's throat.

Bent Subine had made that hammock working of nights beside the roaring fires of the ranch-house in the long winter, and he was inordinately proud of his handiwork. When he saw it hung in the early spring and saw Therise first tuck her pretty self in it, and he stood by to give her a careless-seeming "start," he could have asked nothing better under heaven.

Now he sat on the hard-beaten earth a little way apart, his arms around his knees, and looked out across the Willasanna Plains, though he saw them not, but only the little dark face of the girl humming some gay old air as she swayed.

"Therise," he said presently, "ain't you ever goin' to give me that kiss you promised me so long ago?"

Therise laughed and put her palms to her pretty cheeks, thereby cupping her face like a flower in a chalice.

"Did I promise you that?" she asked innocently.

"H'm," said the man, fingering the spots on his leather riding cuffs where his folded arms brought his hands to the cuffs' edge, "forgot it? You said when th' hammock was done—and before that it was ef I'd get you th' young bob-cat kitten from up th' Flat Stone gulch. An' earlier still it was when I'd lick Bud Peters fer kickin' th' spavined mule."

The girl sat a long moment with her red lips smiling from her cupped hands like a pomegranate in the sun.

Then she leaned forward and touched him lightly on the arm.

"One more time, Bent," she said in the wheedling voice of the born lover of men. "I'll sure pay it if you'll do one more thing for me."

"What?" said the man on the instant. It was evident that he would try for the moon out of the heavens if this girl asked.

"Catch me the big red horse you were telling dad about to-day, catch him for me before he gets him! I'll beat him at his own game. An' I want a new horse this spring anyway."

The cowboy lost a little of his color, for with that request he had a lightning glance down the future where he stood a good chance of losing his job, his employer's friendship, and the busy, glad days at the Palo Verdi Rancho, for whoso opposed John McFarland usually "broke" under his quick and retributive hand. Not much to risk—a bagatelle—for a kiss from the pomegranate mouth smiling there in the shadows, but his all.

"Done," said the foreman grimly, "but ef you fail to pay this time, Therise, I add this country to th' throw. I'm gone."

STRANGE things began to happen in Red Dapple's life.

Horses that were not horses but were weird combinations of horse and something else—humans, chaps, saddles—began to appear on his horizon. At such times he raised his great head and looked at them with eyes that shone in the light like stars, stamped with his black hoofs and squealed a ringing challenge, then wheeled on his hind feet, standing high in the air in the circling sweep, and led Old Blackfoot's pillaged band far and away down the sounding levels.

And once the hybrid thing he mistrusted was Bent Subine on Stormer, once it was John McFarland on his prince of horses, Sampson, and once it was a stranger in that land, a slim dark man who rode a beautiful animal all silver gray with a vanity of silver on its trappings.

"Lord, Lord!" said the cowboy whimsically to himself, "how'm I ever goin' to do her biddin' with John agin' me and nary a man t' give me help?"

And the rancher's keen eyes flamed at sight of Red Dapple and he told himself, "A king! A real king, I make no doubt! We'll have him in before so very long."

And the slim stranger struck a hand on his broad pommel and all the white teeth between his dark lips showed clear.

"*Dios grande!*" he whispered, "*que—un caballo!*"

But John McFarland had to go out to the distant town beside the railroad and he left the wild horse to wait his own good time.

And the foreman was doubly busy with the vast doings of the *rancho* and Therise pouted that her imperious word went unobeyed.

"You don't care, Bent," she said wilfully, and Bent Subine's soft eyes darkened with trouble.

"Don't care! Sweetheart—I'd lose my job—prob'ly will—to get that horse fer you, but John's left me in charge an' how'm I goin' to do it without neglectin' things? Gimme time, Therise, jest a little time——"

But the girl pouted again, after the manner of girls, and turned away, so that the man's heart was torn between desire and duty.

And Therise began to ride the plains, to stand in her stirrups with a hand above her lovely eyes and search the wide expanse for a sight of the wonder horse with the flaming hide and the sharp black dapples. The Willasannas for a hundred miles each way were home to her. She had ridden them since babyhood.

She knew every dip and coulée, every spring and waterhole, every clump of willows and cottonwoods in all their vast sweep.

And so, one day when the high sun picked them out in sharp relief and a little wind wimpled their tall grass, she saw a sight that brought the blood flushing in her dark cheeks, the mist of tears in her eyes. Red Dapple, leading his band, came skimming out from a cup of the northern hills and sailed away down toward the Little Snake that cut its way across from east to west and was always sweet with water.

The young king went to drink.

Far out ahead of the band, imperious, eagle-like, he squared away in a marvelous sweeping gait that took him forward like a bird—the wondrous, rolling, rocking spreading stride of the born pacer.

The girl, watching, stood high in her stirrups and raised a hand as if she imperiously urged him forward, while her eyes, cleared of the first mist of sudden wonder and delight, shone with her father's fire.

Therise McFarland was her father's daughter when it came to horseflesh. There, however, the likeness stopped, for where she was sweet and gentle, yielding, tender, he was steel and iron and granite to those who crossed his will.

"Red Dapple!" breathed the girl aloud; "Red Dapple the beautiful! Oh, what a horse! What a horse!"

And while she watched the beautiful creature sweep down the thundering plains and disappear in the fringes of the Little Snake with his band behind him, one there was who took his entranced eyes from the horses to watch the girl.

This was the stranger of the silver trappings, and if his own eyes had shone first at Red Dapple's beauty, they filled now with a consuming fire to behold Therise McFarland. He had seen much beauty, this man; knew women in far points of the earth, but never had he seen before so free a spirit shining in a face, such parted lips of scarlet over pearls.

THE blood leaped in him keen with flame and he rode up from the shallow coulée wherein he had waited the wild band's coming, and when his horse's shod hoofs struck the level the girl, on her father's big black mount, whirled to face him, startled by the small slight sound.

The man swept off his silver-spotted hat, disclosing a handsome head set thick with raven curls and a lean dark face.

"Señorita!" he said in a voice as rich as a harp, "what goddess of glory brought you forth!"

"Huh?" said Therise, frowning.

The man bowed and smiled while his black eyes, flaming, took her in from head to heel—the dark hair fluffing under the wide hat, the flannel shirt open at the throat, the slender waist of her, the riding-skirt and slim boots.

In that moment he forgot forever Red Dapple and all his kind. Men of his like play many years and finally fall at a woman's feet to pay for all the heart-crimes they have committed.

Don Rodriguez Jovallo had many crimes at his door, crimes against women, and in that moment they rose up in the shadows with dead eyes hopeful of revenge.

"Señorita!" he breathed again, and spurring forward laid a slim brown hand over hers on the pommel.

The blood was bright in his face, the flame was rising in his eyes. "I'd give," he said thickly, "the gems from the crown of the Virgin to kiss your new lips!"

He swayed toward her, his glance sparkling like fire. "I will!" he said and flung out an arm across her breast.

The next moment he had pressed his mouth hard upon the pomegranate lips.

Therise McFarland, pale as milk, shot out a doubled fist and struck him in the face. "For that," she said, "I could kill you!"

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"For that," said Don Rodriguez slowly, "I will some day own you, señorita," and he whirled the gray horse and sailed away toward the south.

JOHN McFARLAND dallied in the far out-country and one day in the ensuing week Bent Subine came to the girl where she drowsed in the gay hammock beneath the cottonwoods.

He stood looking down at her, and when she raised those shadowy eyes to his with the slow, sweet smile, he could have gone on his knees in reverence, so much did he love her.

"Therise," he said, swallowing that his emotion might not sound in his voice, "to-day I've got five of th' boys ridin' after th' wild red horse. To-morrow ought t' bring him in."

The girl sat up on the instant. "Red Dapple!" she cried. "Oh, Bent!"

"We're spreadin' out th' trap-fences to th' stockade now."

"An' you'll break him easy, Bent?" she implored, excited. "You won't let Brad get on him? You'll do it easy, won't you, Bent?"

"I'll do it myself," said the foreman, "an' as easy as I can."

But to-morrow did not see Red Dapple driven into the trap stockade. The five cowboys came straggling in at dusk with soft oaths and round eyes.

"Bent," said Jim Hadley, "that ain't no ord'nary horse. He's got sense and th' eyes of an eagle. Four times we had him comin' an' he schemed his way out. An' run! Jumpin' Jemima! Even Sampson's a four-flusher when he's strung out behind that chap. He's th' wind an' th' spring waters in th' Little Snake an' a prairie fire in a breeze!"

So Bent himself left the ranch work and rode out next day to take a look for himself, but look as he might there was no grazing band to be seen on the green expanse. Neither was it to be found in days of riding. Red Dapple had disappeared.

So Therise pouted and shook her black head and refused ever to pay the sweet ransom she had promised. And then John McFarland came home, and he was not in the best of tempers.

"I saw that red horse you told about," he told Bent Subine, "an' he's clear down by th' El Barenda. Somethin' run him clear out o' th' country, damn it. But we'll have him.

"An' there's another thing that ain't good. They's a bunch of Mexicans hidin' in th' Willasanna hills. I heard it at th' Bar Star ranch. Either rustlers or outlaws. Got t' keep Therise close in."

For if there was one thing that struck next to the rancher's iron heart—after horseflesh—it was his one and only child. But keeping track of Therise was harder to do than to command. She, too, was fired with desire for the pale red horse with the dapples and she disobeyed her father's mandate at every turn.

"Bent," she whispered away from her father's ears, "you've run th' Red Dapple clean away, an' I'll never forgive you. I mean it."

The man stood silent. "Mean that?" he asked presently. "Honest, Therise?"

She nodded her black head and her lips were scarlet lures in the shadow.

"By ——!" he said tensely, "I'll bring him back or die tryin'!"

And by dawn of the next day Bent Subine had quit John McFarland's employ and ridden away without explanation.

No one on the ranch except Therise knew the truth, and she was a bit frightened for once at the result of her heedless speech.

So the days droned by with work and winds and sunshine, and Therise rode far and by on every horse she could steal from the strings, defied her father and pouted a bit. She looked until her eyes ached for a sight of a far band of horses on the green, for a slim cowboy whose loss was beginning to be a grave thing to her. But look as she might she saw nothing.

Not only was Red Dapple gone for good and all, it seemed, but the Willasanna Plains usually so peopled, seemed blank and deserted, though John McFarland's cattle still dotted them and his riders were in evidence. And many a time when she went far from the *rancho* dark eyes watched her from some coulée with an evil light.

Don Rodriguez was planning pay for that stroke in the mouth. Far back in the cups of the hills there lay a hidden camp, filled with men who would do anything under heaven and laugh, and such allegiance as they owned belonged to him. In many a theft, many an adventure, many a high and black emprise, his word had been the law, his clever brain had schemed them to safety.

And now Don Rodriguez planned a greater theft than any of those that had gone before. In his lost little cup of the Willasannas he lay and watched the stars and his blood burned high at memory of that pomegranate mouth above its pearls, the imperious small face of Therise McFarland.

THE summer was all but done. Autumn was in the wind, had scorched the green plains brown with its first frosts.

The *rancho* made ready for the fall roundup.

And then, one early dawn, just as the cook stirred for his fire, there came a booted foot at the door of McFarland's room and Bent Subine stood there. He was lean and brown as leather and his face, seen in the flare of the match the boss lighted, was thin as lath. Behind him Stormer drooped, gaunt and hard as nails.

"John," said the ex-foreman straightly, "the Red Dapple's in yore trap-stockade."

"What!" cried McFarland, his voice sharp with quick excitement, "you brought him in alone? How?"

"Don't ask me how," said Subine, and there was a pathetic note in the words, "he's a prince, a king—an' I've betrayed him. But he's there."

It took but a matter of moments for the ranch to tumble out in the first faint light of dawn—cowboys, vaqueros, hands—and in among them, her eyes round and shining, her usually quick tongue stilled, was Therise. Her hands shook and in her heart there was a great prayer of thanksgiving to the Virgin for bringing back from the void this man. But Subine did not even look at her. He strode at her father's side toward the far stockade that gleamed like the walls of doom on the brown plain.

Quick as a cat Therise climbed its face to look over the top, along with most of the others.

McFarland and Subine went to the huge gate.

There, standing against the white wall, his great head up, his eyes wild and flaming with fear, his breath coming in short inhalations, stood Red Dapple. The eastern light was on his face where the foretop flared about his ears and the wild mane sprayed like a cloud. Beautiful, taut, waiting, tragedy held its breath while the young king stared at his enemies.

"By ——!" whispered the rancher, "better than I thought! Brad—we'll see a saddle on him soon's we eat! Everything else can wait to-day! Why, Bent, I can't say how much——"

But Bent Subine raised a hand and looked the boss in the eyes.

"John," he said, "I'm sorry, an' I've broke a range law in bringin' him here, but he ain't a-goin' to be yours. And Brad ain't never a-goin' t' straddle him."

McFarland's mouth slowly fell open. "Eh?" he said.

"No. I ben after him fer all these weeks sense I left an' I've made up to him in a way—an' I've betrayed him here, th' wildest thing that ever run these plains, an' I done it—for Therise. Therise yonder—fer whose sake—I'd—sell—my soul!" And he raised his haggard eyes and looked full at the small face gazing eagerly over the stockade wall.

"Therise asked me to catch him fer her—ahead of you—to take him out o' your hand as it were—an' I done it. But I promised her that Brad' ud never mount him—not with his methods. I give Red Dapple to Therise!"

IF A bomb had exploded, there could have been no greater sense of shock, for John McFarland was a man of mighty will, of temper.

Now he wet his lips and his face flushed red as fire.

He looked at the man, then raised his slowly kindling eyes to his daughter. "On my own land!" he said, "an' by my own blood! We'll see. We don't wait to eat. Step aside, Bent. Brad, bring out th' ropes." And he strode forward like an engine.

As Brad, the most notorious wrangler in the country, came back with his special rope coiled in his hand, and others joined him, Bent Subine put a hand on his arm.

"Not whilst I can raise a fist, Brad," he said quietly, "you don't."

But before the threat could harden Therise came like a flash around the stockade and flung her arms about Bent's lean waist. Her little face was white, her eyes dark. For once she had overstepped her lifelong privilege, had stirred up trouble that she could not stop.

"Don't! Don't!" she shrieked. "If you love me, Bent, stop! Stop now! Dad'll kill you if you strike him now!"

Slowly Subine's hand slipped off Brad's arm.

He was wax, water, in her little hands. Had she commanded, he would have laid down his life. His hollow eyes were deep with light as he looked at her and turned away.

And Brad strode forward coiling his rope.

Who shall describe what they did to Red Dapple in that breaking-yard?

Brad was a wrangler who never failed. The dumb ones "broke"—or they had no need of breaking forever after. Now he

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"Go in an' cut that rope," said Therise, "or I'll finish you."

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was smiling and revengeful, spectacular.

The boss was for him and Therise looked on in agony.

It mattered not that she hated him and his cruelty.

McFarland was grim and cool.

There were sounds in the breaking-yard—hoarse, savage sounds, screams from a wild throat and such thunder of a great body in travail as the *rancho* had never heard—for Red Dapple was of that breed which dies fighting—and John McFarland thought of the little blue mare of long ago.

Bent Subine, his face drawn, stood outside and did not watch this thing, but Therise hung on the stockade wall and hated her father and wrung her hands and wept.

"Mary Mother! Forgive me!" she sobbed. "First the man I ruin—cast out—an' then the horse! An' they are both kings, worthy of better fate! You Brad!" she shrieked. "Ease him! Ease him! He's chokin'! Whistlin'! Ease him—or I'll kill you! Dad! Bent! He's choking! Oh, my God!"

There was a flash of gay skirts as she leaped from the wall and landed over in the yard. One hand swept a cowboy's holster as she went and in the dust and smother where Red Dapple fought his foes, choking, whistling, went McFarland's daughter, firing.

"Good God!" cried the boss hoarsely, "th' child's gone mad! Catch her, boys, for God's sake catch her! Get her out of there!"

But Therise was braced against the wall and Brad was standing with a hand clapped to a spurting arm, while the settling dust showed Red Dapple prone on the trampled earth, his beautiful eyes staring, his red mouth open, his face to the stockade gate—a challenge to the last.

"Go in an' cut that rope," said Therise high and shrill, "or I'll finish you."

And Brad, taking his life in his hands, obeyed.

With the rush of new air into his dying lungs Red Dapple heaved—coughed—trembled—and rose slowly to his feet, his head down and swinging.

Straight in his range of vision stood Therise. The big eyes stared at her, pitifully, dazedly.

"Open th' gates!" called the girl.

Every man in sight held his breath while John McFarland himself leaped to do her bidding.

Would the wild horse, crazed by his agony, rush on the slight form and tear it to bits? Would he see the opening beside her?

For a long moment the tension held.

Then Therise, the tears on her cheeks dried by her rage, her eyes like flaming fires, uttered a soft word, a coaxing, crooning call—and as if a spell was broken Red Dapple gathered his shaking limbs beneath him and leaped through the open gate to rush, staggering, away to the freedom of the Willasannas in the dawn.

WINTER came in the open land. The grass was brown and dead. Cold winds and bright sun made the country sharp and keen. John McFarland was stern and of an evil temper, for there were many things to vex him. Particularly was he filled with rage over the thefts that had harassed the Palo Verdi for many moons.

Cattle came up missing every month and always they were the pick of the herds—once thirty black steers, fat and profitable; again a whole band of fresh-branded calves, and later a prize bunch of yearlings. And with all their keenness, their vigilance, the riders of the Palo Verdi could not solve the mystery.

"It's them damn rustlers up from th' border! I've ben a-hearin' of their leader, Don Rodriguez Jovallo, an' th' hearin' ain't good. He's ben seen between days at points so fur apart it don't seem possible, an' he's done some black crimes south. They say he's hidin' in th' Willasannas."

Another thing which tended to make McFarland hard to live with was the feud that had existed between him and his daughter since the moment at the stockade gate that day in the fall when the rancher in a white heat of anger had told Bent Subine to "ride away quick an' never press a foot on Palo Verdi soil again."

Subine, as if sick of the whole affair, had wheeled his horse and obeyed, without a look to right or left, though Therise had held out a shaking hand toward him.

Since that moment the girl had never spoken one word to her father. She looked at him with smoldering eyes of temper, disdained his commands, rode his horses and searched the plains for the two things she knew in her heart she would never see again—Bent Subine and Red Dapple.

BUT she was due to see them both and that before the first snow drove whistling against the grass.

On a day when the sun was high and the hard blue sky was cloudless, Therise rode Spots, the *pinto*, far down toward the coulée country where the hills began. She was pensive and sad, filled with the lonely sense of loss that was always with her now.

She seemed to care for nothing, to take no joy in the open land. She let the horse jog and thought of Bent Subine's soft eyes and the kiss she had never paid. She thought of her dad estranged, of all the sorry tangle, and wished miserably, after the tragic manner of youth, that she had never been born.

She did not note the fact that she was near the big coulée, the great deep wash that cut out from the Willasanna hills into the plains and was impassable save at two places. In the spring freshets it would be a raging, bank-high torrent that made a slough below. Now it was dry as dust and sand could make it, sharp and steep, its sides too straight down for horse or man to scale.

Spots jogged along its northern edge and Therise dreamed in her saddle—and all suddenly out of the depths beside her where the lower crossing cut the coulée there rose the heaving foreparts of a horse, a gray horse gay with silver trappings, over whose head there shone two hard black eyes beneath a wide sombrero.

Don Rodriguez had found the time, the place, the prize.

With the first startled glance Therise knew her peril.

The *pinto* was good. John McFarland had no other kind of horseflesh. He could go and the girl flung loose his rein and leaned on his neck. Out along the plain he went like a bolt, his head level, his legs a blur beneath him, running free and well. He shot ahead with splendid strength and speed, and the girl on his back breathed a sigh of relief. She knew he was going up along the coulée toward the hills, but thought swiftly she could swerve to the left when she had outdistanced the gray. But a lifting note that rang like a drum behind her made her turn her head.

Ah! The *pinto* might run, but the horse behind was such a horse as an outlaw might ride, a free, swift thing, like an eagle, that scorned the earth.

Don Rodriguez was coming up at every leap—magnificently.

Therise had a wild vision of that whispered camp among the hills, of rough men and of a fate from which it seemed only the pity of the Virgin could save her now. The breath caught in her throat and she leaned to beat the *pinto* with her flailing quirt.

AND then, out on the keen air, there came the snap of a gun, the whine of lead that cut across behind her. She turned her face and looked. There, across the coulée, riding like the wind and firing as he rode, raced a cowboy on a big dark horse, and he was making for the Upper Crossing a mile ahead—a man who looked to her blurred, excited eyes like Bent Subine on Stormer!

And the outlaw, rising in his stirrups, was firing back.

Would he make the Crossing first—that man across the wash—or would the Don Rodriguez reach her first? She prayed in gasps—and clung to the running horse—and wished for her daddy! Oh, her daddy, with the ready, heavy hand, to kill this thief and worse who rode her down to death and disgrace! Once more she looked over her right shoulder—and a scream cut high and keen above the ring of hoofs. The man across was swaying in his saddle, firing at random! The outlaw had hit him.

And she could feel the nearness of her pursuer—hear the rush of his oncoming. Crazed with fear, gripped with panic, she swerved the *pinto*—flung herself from him and started running toward the wash.

Don Rodriguez, sailing by, reached for her, missed, jerked the gray sliding to his haunches, and he too dismounted with a flutter of ornamented chaps. Grim, excited, panting, his evil eyes alight, he came toward her.

Desperately Therise looked up, around, begging of Heaven a last reprieve. And then, when the show-down faced her, there came into her distorted vision a sight that brought a sob to her throat, a hope into her desperation.

Out from the sheltering cups of the near hills there came a compact band of horses, wild horses, their manes like a sea, the roaring thunder of their hoofs a diapason, and out in front there sailed a great red creature whose satin coat flamed on the brown earth, whose sharp black dapples stood out in bold relief!

Red Dapple, the lost, was back again on the Willasanna Plains!

Like waters rolling they came on straight toward the tragic group on the coulée's rim, and it looked as if they must pour themselves over in one mad avalanche.

Therise McFarland, her father's daughter, welcomed the death beneath the myriad hoofs, the clean death, and stretched out her arms toward it, counting the seconds.

Don Rodriguez, caught unaware in his passion and his evildoing, stood like an image, his brown face gray as death already.

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Then, out on the keen air, there came the snap of a gun, the whine of lead that cut across behind her.

The mark of doom was on him, and rightly, for Red Dapple, stirred by what burning memory of man and his cruelty none might say, opened his mouth in a savage scream and bore down upon them.

The man tried to run, but the great engine of moving muscle was upon him. Behind him the band, in full flight, swerved out and around. Red Dapple, screaming like a maniac, his great mane a spraying cloud, reached the flying figure in its gay clothes—caught its shoulder in wicked teeth—lifted it—flung it—leaped and struck it where it fell—again and again and again.

EXPECTING the like on the next instant, Therise McFarland covered her eyes, then opened them to look again at the manner of her momentary deliverance, and a gasp caught in her throat, for she stood alone on the coulée's rim—alone save for a limp and trampled rag of a man—while down the edge of the wash Red Dapple ran after his fleeing band, his head up and wild, his tail lifted in an arc of savage triumph!

And down from the Upper Crossing was coming another—Oh, Mary Mother, a slim cowboy who rode a big dark horse—Bent Subine on Stormer, too late but in time to lean and catch her to his breast and take the long-deferred payment in solemn gratitude.

It was dusk, winter's dusk, when these two rode slowly into the yard at Palo Verdi.

John McFarland, just coming out to saddle up to search for his daughter, beheld her, white-faced and grave, with her arm around a wounded man who rode unsteadily.

"Dad," she said simply, "th' outlaw got me—an' Bent was ridin' for the Crossing—he's ben campin' in the big coulée all fall—watching fc : just this thing—because he was afraid for me—but he couldn't make it—an'—and—it was all over but th' shouting—for me—when—when—oh, dad!—th' Red Dapple—th' Red Dapple came out o' the hills like the wind in storm—and he—he—" she wet her lips and shuddered—"he swept down on that grinnin' beast and killed him where he stood! We left him there, broke to bits, for th' buzzards to pick. And Bent an' me—we're going to be married soon's he's able. Shall we ride on?"

But John McFarland reached two hands and laid them on those of the two in the saddles.

"Get down," he said, "Bent, an' let th' señora fix you up. Damn it, boy, I've needed you every day. An' for you, you little chip off th' ol' block, what do you want most that yore dad can give you—a new house or th' Red Dapple fer your very own?"

"Neither," said the girl gravely. "I want to live with you, always, an' there'll never be a rope from this ranch go on Red Dapple's neck—not if I can stop it."

BUT it did not need the proviso to bring true that prophecy, for, as if he had paid his last debt to man—and who shall say—perhaps to the slim young creature who stood beside the stockade gate that awful day as well, Red Dapple ran straight out of the ken of the dwellers on the Willasanna Range and was never again seen leading his band upon the broad expanse.

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Polly Wants a Backer

By Dorothy De Jagers

It may not be clear at first thought what a parrot could possibly have to do with success in business. But when the problem includes a young lady with a hobby and a one-hundred-per-cent. charm, the possibilities are infinite. This is a typical Dorothy De Jagers story—humorous and human. There are at least two more to follow.

HONORIA KEMP, "Honey," for short, had been born as retribution into a Pennsylvania family whose idea of interior decoration was having a sore throat painted with iodin. She began to function as a chastening influence about the time cozy corners started cushioning themselves into the angles of otherwise self-respecting rooms. Every interior, you will remember, at this period, was affected with valanced nooks of padded softness where many a worthy soapbox escaped the red-oak range to find itself doomed to the support of a relaxed sense of the decorative. And it was Honey's nook, outvalancing and outcushioning them all, that inspired her, perhaps, to further familiarity with the household gods. At all events, by the time she was eighteen, she could assemble a footstool out of four tomato-cans and a bit of carpet before you could say "William Morris."

Then it was that American merchandising bumped into the discovery that good taste may be a marketable commodity. The bourgeoisie that had previously justified its Mexican-onyx and buffalo-horn settings by the claim that it knew nothing about art, but knew what it liked, was dragged from its smugness by the authoritative tones of the interior decorator.

Guilelessly it gave over its strongholds to be done by Miss So-and-so, formerly with Guizot,—and if in the end the bill suggested that Miss So-and-so had done the occupant along with his domicile, if the fire-gilt elegance of his drawing-room drove him to austere quarters over the garage—I ask you, is Art not worth it?

Certainly such experiences failed to frustrate the awakening consciousness of the Home Beautiful. Gradually the smuggest of the low-brows began chatting intimately of high-boys. Ladies with folding-beds and bea l portières in their past tried to live them down through dissembling Adam ardors. And when, at length, self-made millionaires whose only historical association for Louis the Fourteenth labeled him a devil with the women, could refer to Louis-Quatorze styles without a wicked wink, it can be safely said that the esthetic had come into its own.

During this period Honey's tendencies, now sharpened by a course in applied arts and crafts, tried to slip a few Sheraton standards into her own household, but it seemed futile. For her mother, little member of the mop-and-broom sisterhood, looked upon furniture merely as oak and birch battle-fields where dust was daily doomed to defeat; and her three utilitarian brothers viewed beds in relation to snores, and round tables as unimportant accessories to square meals. It was Bill, the eldest, a rubber-tire salesman by day and a vaudeville patron by night, who said: "Now look here, Honey, our humble home may be furnished in early Pullman and late North-German Lloyd, but it's comfortable. So why not confine your interior desecration to your own boudoir?"

Which she did. But at the end of a fortnight, when the upholstered horrors there had been painted and cretonned into near-Trianon effects, her artistic conscience again drove her down-stairs. Here, during the family's absence, she did some daring things to the Grand Rapids antiques, and succeeded in dragging a green Morris chair to the attic. But the value of every amelioration, however, was canceled by the ferment it evoked. Once only was there cooperation in her ideals. This was the time she objected to the treatment of the walls. Mrs. Kemp and Bill concurred; voicing a sharp protest to Horace, the youngest, about scribbling numbers on the panel by the phone.

YOU can see by this, can't you, how Honey's style was cramped? Stronger and stronger grew her conviction that the decorator, like the prophet, must garner his honors from fields afar. Naturally she anticipated remonstrance, but the confession of New York ambitions raised but negligible discouragement. Bill, indeed, grew curiously mellow, and presented as a parting gift an elaborate desk-set, featuring an impracticable pen with a sweeping blue quill. Yet, on the morning of departure he pleaded a headache as an excuse for not going to the train. It was with moving tenderness, however, that he clasped sister in his manly arms. So what matters it if, as they drove off, sister had a glimpse through an attic window of these same arms clasped tenderly around a green Morris chair, dragging it from oblivion?

And now while our decorator is *en route* to the big city, let us consider her more intimately. She was, in the first place, a highly decorative unit herself: small, animated, agile, with skin tinted like peach-bloom porcelain of the Khang-Hi period and crinkledy bronze hair. Moreover, she had the liveliest set of eyebrows in the business; with one twist could she register more than you or I with a whole Delsarte chart of gesture and the vocabulary of a muleteer. Also she had the knack of dress—the art of taking last year's suit, pinning in a square of tapestry as vest and a filet doily as collar, and faring forth followed by envious glances of the sisterhood gowned by Lanvin. Temperamentally a creature of a bewildering mosaic of moods, of ups and downs as distinct as that in Jacobean carvings. With this, naturally, went all the provocative lovableness of the volatile nature; and if there were times you longed to shake her, these were balanced by occasions on which only a self-control in good working order kept you from hugging her.

In New York she found a boarding-house kept by a gentlewoman with a rich mahogany inheritance, and it was a console-table in the hall that decided its eligibility. When, a week later, an ill-nourished stomach made disparaging comparisons between boarding-house fare and home rations, Honey's eye, refreshing itself in the tints of the Staffordshire on the sideboard, silenced it sternly.

She had decided to apprentice herself to some reputable firm until that day when Honoria Kemp, Consulting Decorator, should gild an upper Fifth Avenue window; but even with tricky eyebrows and a finely grained aversion to Morris chairs, this was not so simple. For two months she met only discouragement; but at length the gods—meaning the household gods, of course—smiled, and she became associated with Velie, Inc. Here she learned many things. She found, for instance, that the true decorator must rechristen the spectrum. A primrose by the river's brim no simple yellow is to him; nay, it is something more. It's gold, no doubt. By the same system, lavender turns orchid. Purple, amethyst. And with this euphemistic trick, bilious natures whose lives have been dedicated to an abhorrence of green glow with joy at the decorator's suggestion of a room done in a jade—the same tones duplicated in hangings and rugs, you know.

FROM this point, our heroine advanced rapidly to the stage where she could spring "rococo" and "motif" with an airy grace that covered the A. E. F. accent. And by these two terms shall ye know the true artist. Velie, however, ignored the significance, keeping her still on shades, cushions and other minor accessories to the Home Beautiful. At first genius satisfied itself in this restricted realm. Excitedly would the apprentice leap from her four-poster at the witching hour of midnight, fumble through jumbled drawers, dedicating, perhaps, her best blouse to this bright conception of what a lamp-shade ought to be. When finally it was finished at 3:16 A. M. the stitches may have gaped an inch apart, but the effect was all to the Louise de Lavallière—and after all, reader, effect is what you want.

But after a while she grew restive—began craving some wider field for her fancy, some field wherein a grouping of varied harmonics might justify mention of *tout ensemble*, for this is another term succulent to the decorator's tongue. And it

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was to Jane Gresham, a woman at the boarding-house, that this discontent vented itself oftenest. Jane was secretary to the president of a bank, and as unlike Honey as possible. Built on strictly utilitarian plans, with the economy of curves conspicuous in a plate-rail, she was as durable, as methodically patterned as an Axminster rug. Nevertheless, essentially human and comfortable she was, and between her and Honey had grown up the warmest intimacy.

It was one evening in her room that the decorator trilled: "Oh, Jane—we're doing the Jansen Orville place, and you ought to see the designs! The living-room is to be paneled in brown burl walnut with a Marieschi landscape and apricot-linen curtains with applied Elizabethan crewelwork. In the library there's to be a marble chimney-piece with a bas-relief of frisking putti." The eyebrows suddenly knit with a sigh. "Oh, I've simply got to do some place all by myself! It isn't fair to keep me on—trifles. I complained to Mr. Hubbard the other day, and he thought if I had a chance to show what I could do Mr. Velie might put me on the regular staff."

Jane studied her interestedly. "I wonder—" She musingly picked up a letter from a desk near by. "Do you honestly think, Honey, your promotion could be managed in that way—by working out some of your ideas?"

"I know it!" with conviction.

Thoughtfully Jane peeled off an edge of the envelope. A long silence broke with: "I have a letter here from my brother Don in Chicago, saying he's been made sales-manager of the New York office. He wants me to find him a small apartment. I wonder—" another pause. "Maybe you could do that."

"Oh!" In the surprise with which we treat miracles was distributed notes of ecstasy.

"Only—" Evidently a bank-secretaryship includes some knowledge of the deadly things interior decoration can do to a bank balance—"he'll want something simple, just inexpensive effects."

"Of course, of course!" Honey refused to be dampened. "Let me see——"

Eyes musingly clouded over like frosted glass, cleared with the trill: "I have it, Jane! One or two pieces of good mahogany, and the rest in reed. Then I'll carry out a motif I've wanted to do for years and years." Honey, by the way, was twenty-four. This ancient yearning was then outlined in details ending with: "Can't you just see the — er — *tout ensemble?*"

JANE achieved mild heights of secretarial approval. But it was thepart that motif promised to play in the designing of Honey's future that seemed to interest Jane most; and at last it was settled.

A whole chapter might be dedicated to the search for an apartment, and its effects upon Jane's nervous system and rubber heels. Details are withheld, however, out of consideration to the reader, since the report must needs evoke memories causing him to break down and cry like a child. It is enough to mention that before suitable quarters were located, Miss Gresham gave way to language distinctly unsecretarial, and her views on the housing problem featured an Italian Renaissance freedom of form that would have charmed even Bill, Honey's brother.

The apartment decided upon was in the Forties—consisting of living-room, bedroom and bath. In the fulness of time, after the landlord had been satisfied that the future occupant was a person of meager expectations as to heat, hot water and general social service ideals, the lease was signed, and Honey got on the job. She took three days from her work, and in this time somehow managed not only a complete cancellation of her shopping-list, but home-made contributions of hangings, cushions and a parchment shade. Sunday was given over to an enshrinement of the household gods.

WHEN at last the apartment was finished, it stood a charming justification for every crime interior decorating has hung on helpless roof-trees. For it was uniquely lovely. The living-room, with its putty-colored walls and woodwork, and its warm-tinted fireplace, gave itself over admirably to the color scheme of brown and sea-green—furnished too, a happy background for the rich tones of reed and mahogany.

Between the windows, valanced in green taffeta, a mahogany tea-cart supported a porcelain tea-set (in green), grouped invitationally around a copper kettle. In the center of the room a large reed table on which the parchment-shaded lamp, with its parrot design, haloed a litter of magazines and a smoking-set, collected about it several chairs of irreproachable symmetry. So the livableness of the effect, you see, was not sacrificed to the decorative values, as often occurs; yet it was of this latter that Honey was proudest.

To be sure, the parrot on the mahogany mirror over the book-shelves, and the Polly in the tapestry fire-screen, might have bothered Mr. Audubon considerably in identifying the species; but their collective effectiveness in supplementing the porcelain birds on the mantle and the parchment shade, filled our decorator with sudden pity for poor Angelica Kauffman's ornamental endeavors.

Yet curiously enough, on Sunday evening, when she and Jane stood at the door surveying the final touches, the tricksy eyebrows puckered worriedly. "It *does* look sweet," she admitted, "but something—something's lacking. Don't you feel it, Jane?"

"I've got more cricks in my back than a Chippendale chair." Jane eased her wearied leanness against a step-ladder. "That's about all I feel now."

Honey continued, however, in musing dissatisfaction at the door. Suddenly she straightened. "Of course! Of course! A live parrot in a reed floor-cage. Why didn't I think of this before?"

Jane roused. "Oh, my child!" was her protest. "Don will never stand for that. A parrot safely tucked into a—er—*motif*, is all right, but I happen to know his feelings about the live variety. He loathes the things. Once when he had typhoid there was a squawky parrot next door, and the way Don cursed it in his delirium was piteous. Anyway, he hates the pets. No." Her voice dropped. "You'll have to get along without Polly."

"But, Jane—" Honey's slanted brows reprimanded this willingness to sacrifice art to ornithological prejudices. "Don't you see it will supply just the right note?"

On the secretary, to whom the right note meant endorsed paper backed up by negotiable securities, the effect of this was negligible. But Honey's subsequent insistence worked into her face so many plaintive patterns of distress, that Jane finally dodged the issue with: "Well, let's wait until Don comes, anyway. No doubt you can bring him around."

And on the following Sunday Gresham arrived.

Honey, unusually decorative in a bronze frock she had finished at 3:21 that morning, met in the parlor of the boarding-house a nice-looking chap, dark and smooth-shaven, with a startling streak of white threaded through blue-black hair. In him, you or I would have seen a well-groomed, a well-poised, energetic individual—a live-wire, capable of taking a business on its last legs, not caring if these legs were Phyfe or cabriole, and putting it on its feet again; equally unconcerned whether these latter were ball-and-claw or not. We would have liked him. So did Honey. On the way up to their rooms, for hats to go to the apartment, she gave the sister an ecstatic hug. "Jane! Why didn't you tell me he had that Whistler feather?"

The bank secretary stared back questioningly. Then groping associations permitted: "Oh, you mean that white streak in his hair? He's had it all his life. Curious, isn't it?"

"Curious!" Honey rejected the adjective. "I think it's simply wonderful. It gives the right note to his face."

She sped to her room for her hat. Once on her head, however, it proved so little consonant with the exhiliaration of her mood that her face puckered in dissatisfaction. Restlessly her glance circled the room, pausing significantly on the desk-set from Bill. Ah! An idea! With one snip she proved that no pen is mightier than a sword-edged scissors. With one snip was the sweeping blue quill disenfranchised from the duties of correspondence. This she then angled experimentally against the subdued background of her hat, and achieving at last the most becoming slant, pinned it on with a violet pin from her cushion.

YOU who know the risky relation between gusty Spring winds and insecure fastenings may deplore this method of adornment. Yet as Honey swept downstairs, her hair bronzed more richly by the blue quill above, she presented a picture justifying any sort of pin, and, after all, reader, effect is what you want.

Certainly, in the ride up to the apartment, in Gresham's glances a tribute to the effect was most conspicuous. Possibly the decorativeness of the artisan contributed largely to the enthusiasm he gave the product of her art. At all events, the first glimpse of his quarters brought out: "By Jove, this is really charming!"

Honey glowed. "But don't you feel a certain lack?"

Gresham surveyed the court-windows disapprovingly. "Yes, fresh air," was his decision. "I suppose—" as he pushed back the taffeta hangings to ventilate the room—"Jane's told you I'm one of those oxygen fiends."

"No, what I meant was—" Honey recaptured her subject, "that the decorative scheme simply cries out for a live parrot—in a reed cage, you know."

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Here Jane offered a warning. "Oh!" but ignoring it, the man groaned. "A live parrot!" Firmly he shook his head. "No, please. I'm sorry, but I've always hated the things. Once when I had typhoid——"

"Yes, I know," Honey anticipated impatiently, "but that was a squawky, disagreeable sort. There are parrots and parrots, you know!"

They were seated by this time, and from his reed chair Gresham leaned forward with a whimsical, "But is it always necessary to carry the—er—*motif* so far? Now, I have a friend who goes in for Chinese ivories, but he's never felt called upon to keep a live Jumbo on the premises." His smile challenged her banteringly, but served merely to crisp a new note of impatience in: "Oh, but that isn't the same at all. Can't you see——"

"Frankly, I can't. If Polly wants a backer, Miss Kemp, she'll never find one in me." Gently but firmly then he defined his parrot reactions. It became plain that this was no casual prejudice, but an abhorrence so complex as to demand a Freudian diagnosis. Every disorganizing, disturbing experience in his life appeared to hear screechy connections with the cracker-craving pet. Once at a house-party. Another time during a crucial business negotiation. Again on a fishing trip. Parrots! They were the polluters of civilization; unnatural vagaries of natural history; birds of prey on mortals' peace of mind. It was painfully evident that a successful search for the bluebird certainly depended upon a successful avoidance of the parrot. And in his terminating strictures rang loudly the swan-song of Polly.

"Do you know, Don," was Jane's immediate comment, "I'm wondering if, after all, you were delirious when you cursed that parrot so expressively during that typhoid spell?" and Gresham had the grace to blush. Honey, however, said nothing. Crushed and silent she sat—crushed under the conviction that Whistler feathers may be rooted in the most bird-like intelligences. Poor little Honey! How could it serve to speak of the principles of balance or the harmony of appointments, in a situation where balance meant the figures in a bank-book and appointments implied merely business engagements?

IT was then that Gresham spoke in a tone that sued pardon for his regrettable obsession. "Personally," he said, "I think the place is perfect just as it is." Yet even this failed to soothe the wounded decorative sensibilities; it was Jane instead who offered: "With or without Polly, it's lovely. And now, good people," she rose with agility, "I have an interior declaration—it's time to eat. Where do we go?"

The Claremont was ultimately chosen as the most effective antidote against Michigan boulevard complacencies; and here, at a table that framed glorious sweeps of the river below, Gresham proved so gracious as to make up for his ornithological obstinacies. Indeed, each course seemed to flavor more richly his highly spiced relish of the occasion, and by the time the salad came, Honey could no longer resist the advantage of the mood. Adroitly she turned the conversation from carrots to parrots. It serves no purpose to inventory her arguments, but this must be said: if Polly wanted a backer, he found a peerless one in the decorator. Only instead of stressing the pet as a *motif* this time, she emphasized its importance to her winging ambitions at Velie, Inc. Before the flow of her eloquence the most firmly woven prejudice would have been as inadequate as a guest-towel on a Saturday night. The man's surrender was inevitable; and the "All right" with which he pushed back his coffee, was utterly resigned.

NOW, the parrot quotations in bird-stores proved to be so dizzying as to route Honey's pursuit of Polly via the advertising columns. Hence each Saturday afternoon she couriered her client through all the parrot parishes lying between Brooklyn and the Bronx. Dozens of these she found for sale, but few had thought to feather themselves in colors harmonious to the decorative scheme. They seemed to go in largely for reds and yellows that would have proved ruinous to the general effect, and, remember, reader, effect is what you want. Now and then, of course, some duller-tinted species were discovered, but these were disqualified in other ways.

Yet in most cases, the unsuccessful owners knew of friends or acquaintances with caged pets they might part with; and in this way the search protracted itself into the summer. It can not be denied that Gresham's escape from each baffled salesmanship voiced itself in a sigh of relief—or shall we say bas-relief? Yet, somehow, he did not appear to be as irked by these wearisome wanderings as might be supposed. For the quest developed elements of surprise and uncertainty that make for adventure; and adventuring with a chirrupy, decorative little person of infectious ardors and intriguing inconsistencies could hardly be termed a hardship. Frequently, too, the excursions resolved themselves into intimate sessions over teatables where the conversation veered so far from parrot themes as to promise eventual turtle-dove significances. By the middle of June, Gresham was calling our heroine Honey with an accent scarcely legitimate for a mere Christian name, and as for Honey—well, by early July, she was bending on him looks which the true decorator ought to reserve specially for the first glimpse of a Boule cabinet.

It was one Sunday during this period that she and Jane had contrived a dinner over at the apartment, after which the latter's plea of a headache speeded Honey and Gresham to the park. Here, on a bench by the lake, the man's troubled countenence suggested something on his mind other than the Whistler feather.

"You look awfully worried," Honey ventured at length.

Gresham smiled abstractedly. "I *am* a little upset," he admitted. "It's a business matter, and I won't bore you with it."

"But I won't be bored," Honey assured him with a convincing angling of eyebrow. "Please tell me." So he did.

It was with admirable restraint that he drew the picture of the president of his firm, the Acme Manufacturing Company, yet the old gentleman stood out clearly as one of those persons of damn few words—the kind, evidently, that interrupts your best story in the middle with: "Come on now, Charlie, get to the point." Personally we hate the cuss, and Gresham established similar leanings. Though he had struggled artfully to set up an *entente cordiale*—to win from his superior's conservatism at least tolerance, if not approval, for his sales-boosting innovations—the president's non-committal shell proved impenetrable.

"This may sound childish," Gresham ended, "but please don't misunderstand. Certainly I can't expect the Chautauqua salute to every plan I suggest, but the success of any organization depends largely upon the sympathy and cooperation of its members, upon an intelligent exercise of the imagination, at least, and this old chap has about as much imagination as—as a parrot."

Honey ignored the simile. "But doesn't he *ever* say he likes your—ideas?"

"My dear lady—" A reminiscent frown etched an irritated design on the man's brow. "His vocabulary would never permit. He's one of these monosyllable maniacs, who takes six verbs and a couple of adjectives from Brother Webster's dictionary and makes them cover every crisis in life. My brightest ideas for boosting business have rarely gotten more than a 'Harumph!' and I understand the only time he ever really went in for freedom of speech was the day the building burned down. Then he loosened up enough to say "Suffering Sou'wester!"

"'Suffering Sou'wester!'" Honey sniffed at its inadequacy. "He must be a silly old thing."

"Not silly exactly," Gresham's sense of fairness qualified, "but the most inarticulate crab I've ever known. I've been scenting active antagonism for weeks, and last night I decided, unless conditions change shortly, to pack up my prophylactic and return to Chicago. The position there, of course, is less important, but the office is staffed with human beings, at least."

HERE it was that Honey's heart behaved like a cheap little clock—skipping several beats, then ticking out jerkily torecover its momentum. Here it was that all the principles of beauty garnered from "Stones of Venice" and "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" lost themselves in the foolish impulse to run tender hands through a Whistler feather; which goes to show you we're all sisters under the Ruskin. For Honey suddenly realized that her castle in Spain was furnished almost entirely with portraits of a dark salesmanager, a fresh-air fanatic of curious parrot perversities, but many other endearing substantialities. "Oh, you simply couldn't go now," she protested weakly. "Just think of your cunning apartment, and—and——"

"I should hate to, of course," Gresham's sigh held competitive regret. "I've gotten strongly attached to New York and—er—some of the features of life here. Yet the fact remains, I'm not doing the company full justice under our Mr. J. Gregory Brownell."

"But don't you think you ought to give Mr. Brownell a better trial?" She caught his arm impulsively. "Won't you wait three months, anyway, and see if things don't change?"

Gresham looked down into the lifted appeal of her face, and should have found therein many inducements to keep the young man out of the West. An expressive sigh escaped him as he took off his

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They were on a glassed-in veranda, wholly surrounded by parrots—parrots large and small, caged and uncaged, vivid and subdued.

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hat; but Honey heard it not. For just then an impious gust of air stirring the Whistler feather brimmed her with a sense of the injustice of convention that grants to July zephyrs liberties denied to impulsive decorators. "Perhaps you're right," she heard Gresham agree at length, and found her hand tucked under his arm as they rose to go.

Yet even this concession failed to lift her spirits. All the next day she went around as cut-up as the marquetry table on which she worked. It was about noon that Mrs. Orville came to view the shade Honey had designed. So voluble, so eloquent was the enthusiasm evoked as to lead Honey into a description of Gresham's interior, with a brief report of the parrot pursuit. Obviously was Mrs. Orville intrigued.

"Let me see!" she murmured. "I've a friend who knows a parrot fancier with dozens of every variety. He might let you have one. Anyway, phone me tomorrow and I'll have his name and address."

This news enlivened Honey somewhat, for she figured, whatever Gresham's decision, hers would be at least the satisfaction of carrying to perfection a decorative ideal, a display of which, too, might establish her importance at Velie, Inc. Furthermore, if the salesmanager were doomed to go out of her life, there remained the solace of knowing a perfectly appointed setting followed him by freight, including a parrot rich in reminders of the lady he had left behind. Yet this scarcely offers an adequate explanation for the prancy, purry person who stepped from the phone booth the next morning. Those of you familiar with the present derangements of telephony might have construed it as the natural reaction to a prompt connection, or sudden humanitarian manifestations on the part of Central, yet there were beatific heights in it beyond even this.

However, this exultation, in the report to Gresham, she tried to dissemble under an inscrutable look—but such being notoriously difficult without the compliance of non-committal brows, the effect was negligible. Certainly, Gresham must have sensed her tension, must have construed it, too, as some psychic assurance of success in her quest, for as they started out Saturday afternoon, she pleaded: "Promise me, Don, you'll always keep Polly, even if you go back to Chicago," and believe it or not, he weakly promised.

THE parrot fancier, it seemed, had his being and his Pollies out in a Long Island suburb; and it was on the train that Gresham traitorously suggested turning the sojourn into a back-to-nature movement, with perhaps a picnic lunch assembled from some village store. With her noblest attempt at an inscrutable look Honey silenced him, and conversation languished until they alighted at a formal little depot.

The day was charming, the July sun tempered by a vaporish treatment of cobalt-blue sky and rose-madder sky. To the right stretched veiled woods done in lovely jade greens and bistre browns, with cleared space here and there lending restfulness to the composition. Gresham's eye, wistfully lost in these persuasive vistas, turned his companion's glance in the same direction; appreciatively she marked how a frilled cloud in one corner of Heaven contributed just the right note to the decorative scheme. Truant impulses stirred in her; but resolutely she wheeled, with a movement indicating, perhaps, that she was a decorator first and nature-lover afterward.

It was then Gresham spoke dully. "There's a garage," he said. "We'd better taxi out." He started off for the swinging sign and in three minutes was back in a car. Honey's brief directions to the chauffeur seemed to prove intelligible, and off they rolled.

A twenty minutes' ride brought them to the right number, and Honey was out and up the steps of an old-fashioned brick house before Gresham had even alighted. It was a maid who answered her ring and showed them into an old-fashioned parlor. This proved a faded, provincially furnished room, suggesting premium-list appointments; but various cabinets here and there stocked with unusual curios of associative value rather than intrinsic worth somehow indicated the triumph of wanderlust preceding the period of coupon-husbandry. Before Honey could coordinate her impressions of the mongrel effects, however, her attention was diverted by Gresham.

"Isn't it sticky in here?" he complained. "I wish somebody'd invent a system of ventilation to keep a room sixty degrees summer and winter—" He started as a dry "Harumph" sounded in the hall. Almost immediately there entered a chilling old gentleman with an apathetic eye framed in steel-rimmed glasses—the president of the Acme Manufacturing Company.

Gresham gasped. "Why, Mr. Brownell, I had no idea—" Sternly he turned to Honey, but that young woman launched into a hurried identification of herself, her sponsor and her errand.

WHEN she had finished, their host directed them to dropsical chairs. "You say—Gresham wants—a parrot?" His speech was labored, jerky, and peroidical pauses gave the effect of being interspaced by dashes. Then, turning to study his salesmanager curiously, he went on: "Didn't know—you were keen—about parrots."

The latter gave a hollow laugh, which Honey hastened to cover with: "Mrs. Orville's friend tells me you have some marvelous birds. Mayn't we see them?"

There was a brief silence. Then the president of the Acme Manufacturing Company rose slowly and led them into the hall, where Honey managed to whisper contritely: "Don, please don't misunderstand. I knew who he was from the first, but I thought you two might get together, if you could know him outside the office. I——"

It was Gresham's turn at an inscrutable look. The effect was, thanks to stationary eyebrows, more successful than Honey's, yet the grim commissure of his lips might have been construed as the conviction that an interior decorator is capable of anything. By this time they were on a glassed-in veranda wholly surrounded by parrots—parrots large and small, caged and uncaged, vivid and subdued. It was to a plump product of the tropics, feathered in harmonious greens, that Honey sped instinctively. "What a perfectly cunning one! Just the right shadings! Where did you ever find so many?" This to Brownell.

"All over the world," he announced rather proudly; and the additional queries this elicited drew from him ultimately a parrot autobiography.

It seemed as a boy he had run off to sea, and it was in North Africa that he first took Polly to his bosom. This happened to be a blunt-tailed specimen which developed attributes so antidotal against seasickness and homesickness as to endear the whole feathered tribe to the runaway. Every port thereafter, accordingly, yielded him at least two of its species. At one time, he said, his collection had included kakapos or owl-parrots from New Zealand, bat-parrots or lorikeets from India; macaws from Paraguay and parrakeets from Australia. There followed then a few highly-colored adventures in which Polly and her backer had figured; and gradually reminiscence lit the fires of youth in the apathetic eye—loosened, too, the shackles from the inarticulate tongue. The president of the Acme Manufacturing Company grew surprisingly boyish, unbelievably chatty. Throughout, Gresham's amazement became increasingly evident, and his "By Jove! How interesting!" at the conclusion was surely a tribute to the polysyllabic eloquence rather than to Polly herself.

BROWNELL, nevertheless, expanded under the approval and turned smilingly to Honey's murmur: "Mrs. Orville's friend said you sometimes sold one. Mr. Gresham"— indicating the subdued green bird—"would love to buy this one."

The poor salesmanager stood muted by the code which forbids a gentleman's calling a lady a liar; but into this silence his superior broke with: "Gad, Gresham! Why didn't—you tell me—parrots were your hobby?" Then he turned to his collection with a musing: "Harumph! Don't usually part with my pets. Wouldn't, only to somebody—who loved the little beggars—as I do. About this one—wait till I see. Want to speak to my daughter."

After he left, Gresham sagged against the porch railing disconsolately. This immanence of acquisition seemed to have sharpened his parrot prejudice into active expression. The distaste in his face was tinged with something approaching fright. "Honey," he begged frenziedly, "do you think it's fair to this household pet to drag it from a home where it's getting the best of care, and——"

"Oh, silly, they require very little care."

"Well, unless you have a stand-in with the S. P. C. A. you've got to feed the things now and then; and suppose it gets sick on me?"

"Oh, all they need is a cracker occasionally," was Honey's airy assurance; "and they're frightfully healthy, I understand."

The owner's return prohibited further discussion. "Bird's yours, Gresham," he announced magnanimously, with the manner of Cornelia parting with one of her jewels.

A sum was then mentioned casually, after which Gresham dragged from his pocket two bills with a gesture that ought to be used in illustrating that old adage about a fool and his money. Then while the purchase was being wrapped—Honey had insisted upon taking it—Brownell conducted them back into the faded parlor.

"Of course, you understand about food, I suppose?" was his first remark to Gresham

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"Oh, yes, crackers," was the dull answer.

Brownell laughed, out of tribute for this ostensible sample of salesmanagerial wit. "Best food is a mixture of hemp, sunflower-seed, unhulled rice and cracked corn. Little fellow likes bananas, apples, oranges and berries, too. Some authorities advise hazelnuts and almonds. Baked peanuts excellent. Keep bird in good condition, you know."

Under the weight of these dietetic demands Gresham dropped in his chair; but relentlessly straightened at the dramatic warning: "Remember though, Gresham. Chickweed and parsley—never!"

"Parsley and chickweed." In the salesmanager's murmur a note of hope sounded; but ignoring this, Brownell pursued:

"Little red pepper's good. Cuttlebone too. Put fresh twig in cage for bird to gnaw on. Little fellow loves entertainment."

Gresham's muffled groan here should have canceled his name on any entertainment committee, but Brownell's directions continued: "Bird likes to bathe—out of cage. Great little splashers, you know."

Even this ablutionary accomplishment failed to draw Gresham from his coma. But a cryptic glance at the decorator prefaced: "They are—healthy animals, I understand."

To this the president gave a reflective "Harumph." Then his diagnosis. "Of course, they are subject to—inflammation of lungs. Bronchitis, too. Dr. Green advises for pneumonia fifteen drops of glycerine, oxymel of squills and mucilage of gum. Personally—I prefer—at least—for colds in head—five or six drops of aconite in one fluid ounce of water." The apathetic eye behind the steel-rimmed glasses gleamed with the pride of out-prescribing Dr. Green; and his voice dropped to a dramatic sick-room whisper as he said: "Must give you—one warning—on account of this susceptibility: *Always see that room is kept eighty degrees Fahrenheit.*"

Honey gave a gasp as the fresh-air fanatic ran a dazed hand through his Whistler feather. For the first time, the full ignominy of a business man doomed as sole support, nurse, dietician and bathing attendant of an abhorred parrot worked its way into her consciousness, but before she could react outwardly, Gresham had brightened, and a note of hopefulness quivered in his query: "They are short-lived, you say?"

BROWNELL rose to take the wrapped cage from the maid, and, in passing, gave the other an awkward pat of reassurance. "Don't you worry about that, young man. Average age of parrot is seventy. Some have lived to be ninety. With good care, this little beggar ought to be with you for fifty years, anyway."

A gesture of futility expressed itself in Gresham's reach for his hat. Then droopingly he followed Honey into the hall. Here the usual terminating amenities were observed; but in the act of opening an outer door, Brownell halted his salesmanager. "Gresham," he said, "been thinking about some of your schemes. Good ideas in 'em. Hedges, the general manager is leaving next month, you know. Wouldn't be surprised if you stepped in his shoes."

Gresham stared. After a moment he succeeded in assembling a few broken sentences of gratification; but unity and coherence failed to establish themselves until they had reached the sidewalk.

"General salesmanger," he mused. "That means fifteen thousand a year, little decorator-person."

Now, according to all the laws of cause and effect, Honey should have been transported to the headiest heights, having established Gresham permanently in New York with new prosperity and a decorative parrot; yet it was a sharp sense of failure that held her silent through the trip to New York. For a consideration of her companion's rosy future served only to remind her that never once had he elicited any desire to include her in it.

PROBABLY he hated her, hated her subterfuge about Brownell and her parrot persistencies. A sudden resentment against the feathered pet in the seat turned to them roused fierce and reckless parrot-cidal impulses in her. "I wonder," she mused grimly, "what would happen if you fed 'em chickweed and parsley?"

Gresham, unconscious of the cosmic forces below, merely smiled abstractedly; and in this preoccupation Honey saw further indications of his detachment. Probably he was thinking of the fifteen thousand; and oh! suddenly she remembered how fifteen thousand can make for masculine eligibility in the eyes of designing womanhood. In the subsequent ten moments she peopled that perfect living-room with irresistible houris, vampiring in the shade of the parrot-patterned lamp, arranging shining hair before the Polly-designed mirror—feeding the caged pet itself choice bits of—er—sunflower-seed or—or cracked corn. Shuddering waves of unhappiness then came to inundate all her ideas of the Home Beautiful; and believe it or not, when they finally entered that tasteful living-room, where they were to meet Jane, our decorator turned upon it a look of the openest hostility.

Yet the artistic consciousness is a persistent thing. Polly, unwrapped and stationed between the windows, proved it. For so adequately did she fulfil her ornamental obligation as to force a trill of satisfaction from Honey's depths of despair.

"Oh, Don," she crowed, "won't he be just too perfect in that reed cage?"

Gresham took off his hat and came to her with a disturbing gravity. "Honey," said he, ignoring the parrot, "Honey, wouldn't you—wouldn't you—like to do a home of your own—ours, I mean?"

Honey gave a little gasp. Then her eyes flamed, Orion-bright, under quieted brows. "I'd love to," she said simply, and Gresham took her in his arms.

"I've been caring for ages"—the whisper lost itself in crinkles of bronze hair—"but I wasn't in a position to ask you until I knew just where I stood. Now that things are settled—Oh, dear little decorator-person—" He took her face in one hand, and then, just as he was about to collect his just deserts, there came from the cage a loud "Harumph!"

Startled, the lovers drew apart. Gresham took a minatory step toward the pet—a step fraught with parsley and chickweed promises, but Honey blocked his path with a chair. Then gently pushing him into it, she drew up a reed stool. "Of course, dearest," was her contribution, after several moments dedicated to Romeo-and-Juliet business, "I always want to go on with my decoration. I mean, just study and keep up. Good taste, you know——"

"Harumph!" came from the *motif* in between the windows. Both ignored it crushingly this time, and after a pause Honey went on curiously: "By the way, Don, just what does the Acme Manufacturing Company make, anyway?"

"Oh, lots of things," Gresham told her, "but our biggest line is—toothpicks."

"Toothpicks?" Rounded eyes repudiated the testimony of perfectly normal ears. "Toothpicks!"

Somehow I feel it an insult to your intelligence to report the writhing reaction of the artistic nature confronted with this arch-enemy of good taste. It was unthinkable—like attaining one's castles in Spain and finding them furnished with cuspidors. Dully the decorator sat for long moments; at last an excited working of the eyebrows proclaimed the birth of an *art-nouveau* refinement. "Oh, darling, listen!" she enjoined, and confided her scheme.

Gresham's first response was a laugh which he contrived to cover with a cough. "Oh, little girl, that's impossible!" he begged off.

"But you've got to manage it!" with all the firmness which had established Polly among the Lares and Penates. Then followed all those wheedling artifices by which woman establishes her incurable Evehood. There were accents of tenderness—tyranny with the dismal threat of tears. It was, however, a hand of guile combed caressingly through the Whistler feather that eventually did the work.

"WELL, if I can arrange it," Gresham sighed, non-comittally, "I agree," and the note of dubiety in the promise lost itself in the click of the latch as Jane entered.

To a trilled bulletin of the engagement the sister stamped her approval with a businesslike kiss on Honey's mouth. "And guess what?" The latter hardly waited for the termination of the salute, "Don has promised to enlarge the Acme toothpick and let me design a *motif* for it."

"Oh!" grinned Jane.

"Ahem!" blushed Gresham.

And then, from in between the windows burst a cry of poignant despair: "*Sufferin' Sou'wester!*" and as they looked, a ruffled head hid itself beneath a green wing.

Then Gresham laughed. It was a foolish little laugh, but there was just the right note in it that gave the effect of imperturbable bliss. And after all, reader, effect is what you want.

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The Salving *of* John Somers

By John Fleming Wilson

A long, hard fight against heavy odds; a woman's fight for the man she loves; and, running through it all, ships and the sea, presented with John Fleming Wilson's characteristic skill and understanding. Dramatic, tense, gripping—this story is one of Mr. Wilson's best. It is one of a group of specially chosen sea stories that EVERYBODY'S plans to publish in the next few months.

FOR three long and feverish years the shipping men of the Pacific thought and planned and endeavored, with varying fortunes, nothing but the salving of vessels long cast away, or sunken, or dismantled. Freights waited for ships that were not, the world hung on the news of obscure voyages, and riches ebbed and flowed under the hasting hands of the wreckers. The story of this may be read in the papers with all the names, the successes and the tragedies. Nowhere will you find any hint of the history told here. The daily press notes little of such events as the determined rescue of an obscure human being, and there are no quotations in any market for castaway souls haled into port for refitting. But the great fact remains that John Somers, outcast and disowned and abandoned, came back out of the southern deeps and played a man's part. He was just as truly salved by Angela Gaskell as any wrecked steamer ever was salved and put back into trade by daring and resourceful men. And the profit that Angela realized——!

Every now and then something happens to mark a man among his fellows. On a succession of blowy March days four men landed from four different steamers at Port Townsend, Astoria, Eureka and San Francisco. Each of the four turned his back on the vessel that had brought him and made his way quickly to his home. Each said to his wife, his sister, his sweetheart or his daughter: "If it hadn't been for John Somers, I'd ha' missed coming home."

The story of the affair they referred to may be read, if you like, in any of the papers of that date. It is short, lacking in detail and commonplace, as follows:

> Eight survivors of the steam schooner *Maximilian* were taken off a raft on which they had spent four days without food or water yesterday forty miles west of Pt. Reyes by a boat from the steamer *Fortuna*. The *Maximilian* foundered during last week's gale while bound from Puget Sound to San Diego.

The part that John Somers played in this obscure tragedy escaped the notice of the reporters in press of bigger news. But quietly the word dribbled up and down the coast by word of mouth, among wives, sweethearts and daughters, that there was a young seaman of that name who was a hero. At one time and another inquiries were made by soft-voiced women as to his whereabouts and his welfare. But John Somers had vanished into the hustling world, a mote in its great currents. The men who had proclaimed his daring went their ways, and spoke of him no more. Only a woman here and there thrilled when she heard the name "Somers," or grew thoughtful over some item in the news of a like tragedy. Of all who had dreamed of him, but one never forgot him.

Angela Gaskell was a pretty, well-mannered, industrious girl of seventeen when her father had come home from the wreck of the *Maximilian* and related over the supper-table the feats of John Somers. At eighteen she finished her business-school course and became a clerk in a shipping-office down on Battery Street in San Francisco. When she was nineteen her father (lacking a John Somers to aid) failed to return from a voyage to China and left her to fend for herself.

In the hour that her compassionate employer gave her to digest the news that had come to the Exchange, Angela grew up, turned the leaf of her old life and faced the world with fresh understanding. She went home that evening and spread her father's bed anew, brightened the flowers in the vase on the mantel, dusted her mother's picture, changed the tidies on the chairs in the sitting-room, polished her father's heavy Sunday boots and put moth-balls in his overcoat pockets.

THIS done she unlocked the tall, old-fashioned walnut "secretary" in the dim hallway and went through its contents by candlelight. At midnight she had finished. She relocked the desk, took a small assortment of papers to her bedroom, shut the door and stood in the darkness a long time, pressing her hot hands over her burning eyeballs. Presently she undressed and got into bed. Face to the pillow she murmured a new prayer:

"O God, please save John Somers!"

Out of the darkness a question formed itself: *"My child, what does John Somers look like?"*

Angela shut her eyes tight and tried to remember her father's clumsy description: *"A tall, fairish chap with big shoulders, curly blond hair, blue eyes and a kind of drawly way of talking. When he's puzzled, he throws his head back and half closes his eyes and you see him gathering like a cat for a spring. If he has any folks, I never heard of 'em."*

With this description the Invisible was content and withdrew. Angela fell asleep.

In the morning she returned to the office and resumed her work with exactly the same air as usual. But there was new purposefulness in her movements, and her employer remarked to his partner: "That Gaskell girl is all right. I wonder, did the old man leave her anything?"

"Mighty little, I guess," said the other. "But she won't need much. She'll marry before long."

The senior rubbed his nose pettishly. "I hope it's not to a fresh-water scoundrel. Nice fine girls like Miss Gaskell usually do." He blinked and suddenly recalled his wandering thoughts. "Now, about that cable from Ingraham—if the *Challenger* wreck is worth a dollar, it's worth——"

A month later Angela Gaskell's starry eyes suddenly fixed on a name written in the middle of a letter from a New Zealand firm of shipping men. This is what it said:

> . . . No man here we feel like trusting with the job you have in mind. The best available man is Capt. John Somers. He is anxious for the berth, but can offer no references. He is, we believe, a resident of San Francisco. If you can recommend him, we would advise cabling, in which event we shall immediately engage him as master of the *Challenger* for the voyage to your port.

Angela reread the passage and put together the details she had gathered about the *Challenger*. It had been raised from a reef, towed into Auckland for refitting, and her employers had purchased it for a large sum with the intention of bringing the old vessel to San Francisco, and loading her with grain for Europe. Then her eyes rested on the scrawled notation in pencil at the foot of the page:

> Nobody knows this John Somers. Rumor that he is crooked. Must get somebody else.

She filed the letter carefully and went on with her work. That night she lay awake a long time and, in the end, whispered her perplexity into the darkness. Whatever answer came, she slept.

THE next morning her employer was surprised that Miss Gaskell did not, as usual, leave his office immediately after receiving her instructions for the day. He lowered at her.

"What is it? Want a raise?"

Angela shook her head. "Not that, Mr. Habberd. But I noticed you could find nobody that knew Captain Somers—the man Giddings, Ltd., thought might bring the *Challenger* here."

Habberd's eyes brightened. "Most bothersome. You know anybody knows him? Speak quick. Got to cable to-day."

Angela hesitated. Then she said quietly: "I know him."

"Well?"

She gave John Somers an excellent character, while her employer studied her. At the end Mr. Habberd said "Humph!" and dismissed her. But later he summoned her and said gruffly: "Now about Captain Somers—know any one who would go

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his bond? One can't be too careful these days, and those Auckland chaps are evidently leary of him."

"How much of a bond?" Angela asked.

"Five thousand dollars."

"I—I could find out at noon," she said, and escaped.

Several times she had been sent by her office to see bonding companies, and Angela determinedly sought out a manager whom she recalled as unusually pleasant and civil. To him she opened her business briefly. The manager asked a few questions. She answered them frankly, and he concluded by saying: "I'd like to do you a personal favor, as you have known Captain Somers so long and so well. But the rules of this business are plain and not to be evaded. The captain is in New Zealand and can't be got at. We'll only handle the bond if we are secured in full right here in San Francisco. You see, they'll ship a rich old cargo on the *Challenger*, and it's too risky to chance a man we don't know all about."

"I think I know a friend of his," Angela said slowly. "You'll take property?"

"Certainly, Miss Gaskell."

Angela returned to her office and went to her employer. "I would like this afternoon off," she told him. "A friend of Captain Somers is ready to go his bond and wants me to help arrange it. My—my friend saw the bonding company."

Mr. Habberd stared and nodded. To his junior he remarked: "I hope that captain isn't the same fellow Hinkley was talking about. But the bond will cover it all. Hang these fellows who always have women friends to speak up for them!"

"I rather think Somers must be all right if Miss Gaskell——"

"Sure."

The next night Angela did some hard figuring in her room. The next morning she dropped into a newspaper office and paid for an advertisement to rent her house. Within a week she quietly changed her address on the office-register and moved into a single room out in the Mission. After mortgaging her home and adding to the sum so obtained from her savings-account in bank, she had less than one hundred dollars left. She asked Habberd for an increase and got it with some difficulty. Her employer was in a bad temper. The *Challenger* had put back into port for repairs within two days after sailing for the Coast.

THE next two months were never to be forgotten by Angela. The old ship, after lying for years on an outside reef, had been but hastily refitted. She was overloaded and undermanned. It was doubtful whether she would arrive. For three weeks there had been no word of her. Then a Union Mail boat had spoken her and reported that she was making good progress. Ten days after that another steamer wirelessed up that the ship *Challenger* had been partially dismasted in a gale, and from that day till the day a hurrying transport from Manila had sighted her six hundred miles off the California coast, not a word came to satisfy Angela's anxieties. But on the eightieth morning Mr. Habberd came into the office with swinging step, and announced that the *Challenger* was inside the Heads and would be berthed that afternoon.

He dropped a word for his clerk: "Captain Somers ought to thank you personally, Miss Gaskell. And if all ends well, you'll have our thanks as well."

With a great effort she smiled. When Habberd was gone, she stood like stone a while. What was to be done? She had risked this man's being the John Somers her father had spoken of, who had, indeed, saved her father's life. What if it were not? And how was she to explain to him, even if he were the same John Somers? What would he think of an unknown young woman's going his bond? For she had no doubt now that all her efforts to hide her own connection with the bond would be in vain.

While she stood in this dilemma the outer door opened and she looked into the blood-shot eyes and haggard face of the man she was thinking of. John Somers stood before her, swaying drunkenly on his legs, a worried smile on his full lips. His closely cropped hair was fair; he was tall, broad-shouldered and lithe. And as his eyes rested on her she saw him tilt his head back with a curious closing of the eyes, and his muscles gather themselves. The room reeked of whisky. With a cold, alert air she got her hat and coat and slipped by him and out of the office. She went home, telephoning on the way to her employer that she had been taken suddenly ill and would not return to work that week.

BUT it so happened that she was not destined to go back to that office again. The news of what had happened reached her through the cheerful gossip of another girl who had long worked under her. She settled with the bonding company and found herself reduced to an entire capital of two thousand dollars. Her house was sold. John Somers had vanished. A single gleam of light shot through her darkness: Habberd himself had proclaimed that Captain Somers was only technically at fault and that whatever might be said of his business habits, he was a first-class seaman.

In another office Angela found herself slowly regaining peace of mind. She discovered that the loss of her money was little compared to the satisfaction of not having to make any explanation to Somers. He had never inquired who was his bondsman and (indeed) pooh-poohed the whole thing as needless. It was clear that he had no sense of having betrayed a confidence. She hoped never to hear his name again.

But Fate brought him before her once more and in nobler guise. The papers announced a wreck off the Oregon coast and assigned briefly a gallant rôle to a nameless hero. Angela caught a few sentences of gossip in the Exchange while there on an errand, and knew that John Somers had proved himself fearless and self-sacrificing. She glowed. And from this time on she yielded to her passionate longing to put him where he belonged—high above his fellows, respected, honored, unsoiled.

For a few months she gained only glimpses of him, little moments in his career. His name was on the crew-list of a steam schooner bound for Hilo—signed as quartermaster on a steamer carrying lumber—scrawled on a receipt for wages off a British tramp—marked plainly after an entry in the smooth log of a schooner making the outside ports. This information she got for a price from one of the hangers-on in the custom-house. When the entries ceased, she began to lose sleep. She went so far as to visit the police courts on a chance of discovering him among the day's sweepings of the city.

It was plain that he no longer offered himself as an officer, much less as a master. He was going down steadily. Her fancy pictured him as the man she had seen staggering into Habberd's office. And always the vision changed and she caught his queer, strained pose, head tilted back, eyes half shut, muscles rippling as if for a spring. Before that image she drew back, hands pressing her eyes, nerves quivering, throat choked.

"*O God*," she prayed at last, "*never let him come back here.*"

OUT of the invisible he stepped, as if pushed forth by grim Omnipotence, as if God answered: "*You wanted him. Here he is.*"

One afternoon when San Francisco's wintertime lay mistily over the Golden Gate and bright fires burned in old-fashioned offices, Angela looked up at a visitor. It was John Somers, neatly dressed, sober and shy. She was startled to know that he had no recollection of her, did not connect her in any way with his past. Then she chided herself for foolishness and asked him his business.

"I hear your people need a skipper for a steam schooner," he said. "I want the job."

"You have your papers—your references?" she inquired with what coldness she could assume.

"Yes, ma'am."

"You know," she went on, "they are so particular here. You have to be well known before they'll listen to you."

He smiled and she realized that he was handsome. "I know that," he murmured. "Maybe—you might say a word for me, ma'am? My papers are all right—but nobody knows me; that is, nobody to say a good word for me. I need the job."

For the moment she stared at him. Did he know? Did he suspect her interest? She put the notion aside as absurd. The fact remained, he had asked her help. She had vowed never to refuse anything to the man who had saved, not only her father's life, but the lives of others. If he observed the flush on her cheeks, he did not attribute it to his own presence. But she knew, as women know such things, that he was enormously admiring.

"Leave your papers with me," she said curtly. "Come back in an hour."

He thanked her awkwardly, and handed her the little packet that contained his history as a seaman. "They're all I have," he murmured, and departed.

She hurried after him, calling him breathlessly. He turned and she saw his head tilt back.

"Please—please don't take a drink," she whispered.

All color ebbed from his face and he gazed at her as if fascinated. She caught his husky mutter: "My God! Does everybody know?"

"No!" she cried back, just as huskily. "Only me! I won't tell!"

At the end of the hour he came back very quietly. She greeted him coolly.

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"I'm afraid they won't have time to consider your application, Captain. They say they—they want a married man."

"I'm not—don't fill the bill," he replied gently. He raised his eyes to hers and she thrilled. "Thank you, ma'am. They all want married men these days."

Angela took a step forward. "Don't despair," she said sharply. "Couldn't you get a job, say, for ten days, and then come back? Often there's something turns up when they need a man in a hurry."

Somers considered this a while. Then he nodded and went out.

It was two weeks before he came again. This time he was rather flushed with drink and she saw that he was naturally imperious. He was, however, perfectly polite.

"There is a position open at Gimbal & White's," she told him. "They have a brand-new steamer ready for sea and they are looking for a master for her. Could you see them to-morrow?"

His eyes met hers and she saw the sadness hidden in their depths. "To-morrow? I'll try, ma'am. But I don't suppose it would do much good. A new steamer is too high for me to look, I'm afraid."

"Try," she murmured and turned her back.

John Somers duly presented his credentials to the firm of Gimbal & White, and found himself welcomed with unusual civility. White himself was the spokesman.

"Hang it all, Captain," he said, "you seem to be always off on some job or other. We tried to find you a week ago. You are just the man in our eye—deep-sea, some creditable papers, more than creditable stories about you, and as nice a woman as ever trod shoe leather ready to make a home for you. We must keep an eye on you, Captain. Will you go as mate of our *Porpoise* till we have a ship for you? Not a word! You have exactly two hours to get aboard, and you'll be a hundred miles to sea at midnight. Hawaiian ports." Mr. White shook hands and dismissed him.

OUTSIDE the office John Somers stood in a daze. He tilted his head and peered into vacancy through half-shut eyes. Then he sprang into activity and sought Angela Gaskell at her place of employment. She confronted him coldly.

"I know just what you want to say," she said. "The fact of the matter is, nobody would have you without some kind of recommendation. But it struck me as too bad you couldn't get a job."

"But they said—they think I'm going to be married!"

"That's what I told them," Angela returned quietly. "Aren't you?"

"But—they said—who do they think the girl is?"

"Does it matter?" she rejoined tartly. "You have the job and you'll get a better one later—if you keep straight. I'm very busy, please."

The *Porpoise* sailed, and Angela went about her work without any response to the sly jokes of her fellow-workers. When she read that John Somers's steamer had arrived in Hilo she shrugged her shoulders. When it returned to San Francisco and she discovered that Somers had quit it in Honolulu she bit her lip and became only more thoughtful.

A later mail-boat brought her a letter from Somers. She read its brief message and laid it away with her other keepsakes. He wrote:

DEAR MADAM:

I couldn't come back and find that girl not waiting for me.

Resp'y,

JNO. SOMERS.

A year later Angela got the information she had paid to obtain. It was a brief and business-like report of a discreet agency:

The man John Somers is now running a small schooner called the *Maid of Bath* and trading among scattered islands to the east of the Hawaiians. He is reputed to be a morose, sullen man and his credit is poor. So far as we can ascertain, he has no white associates and keeps clear of the natives. He is not sober. The only firm that has dealings with him seems to regard him as honest but untrustworthy. He has never changed his name, so far as known. Our inquiries into his past record seem to indicate that he is well educated, and comes of a good family in an Eastern state. Our agent believes that the man Somers has no intention of returning to America, though he is decidedly taciturn and hard to get information from. He owns two-thirds of the schooner *Maid of Bath*, which is valued at nine thousand dollars.

WHILE she was considering this in her room of evenings, and studying both herself and her future, Angela found that a fresh problem had interjected itself. She was, in spite of herself, beloved by a man whom she liked much and respected. He had become imperious lately and he must be answered fittingly. What that answer might have been, had the occasion been propitious, Angela feared to admit to herself. As it chanced, her wooer came when she was frantic over her problems, there was high language, and she dismissed him with the flat statement that she was betrothed to another. That lie she regretted on her knees in an agony of shame.

But this ended her indecision. She faced the truth. She was forever bound to the haggard, sullen man of the *Maid of Bath*. Youthful and lovely she was; high-spirited and self-respecting—and she loved him. The feeling which had once been a girl's worship of a strong and debonair and careless hero had grown into a passion with roots deep in her being. He was hers. She had asked for him and God had given him to her. In the light of this tremendous fact she laughed—and threw herself into the battle before her.

At the time she kept her secret well. First, a newspaper printed the news that a marriage license had been issued to John Somers, age 34, and to Angela Gaskell, spinster, age 22. Angela herself called the attention of a reporter nosing for news to this, and unblushingly related to him the simple story of a hasty wedding in a small town outside the city. The paragraph appeared next day duly embellished by the admiring reporter, and Angela received the puzzled congratulations of her friends with calm unconcern. Then she quietly quit her position, giving the waterfront reporters a brief item about her sailing shortly for the South Seas to join her husband, Captain John Somers, of the *Maid of Bath*. That paragraph, she knew, would some day meet his eye. To anticipate it she fled southward.

In Honolulu she arrived quite simply as Mrs. Angela Somers and got lodgings to wait for the schooner, which was due within a fortnight. She kept to herself strictly, spent her leisure on the beach, and eschewed making any acquaintances. But open ears could not help hearing odd gossip about the master of the *Maid of Bath*. In the little island life John Somers loomed large. He was handsome—and the natives could not sufficiently express their admiration for him; he was daring, skilful and reckless—men of all colors talked about his mysterious achievements.

Of all she listened to, Angela found the sidewise, idle and crooked gossip of women the hardest to endure calmly. But slowly she began to know that the man whose name she had taken was no lover of women. They thought him brutal and steely. He had given none the occasion to boast his wooing. Men spoke of him jestingly as "the lady-hater." But all the talk, such as it was, uncovered the man's glaring faults and marked him as an outcast.

On a fine morning Angela saw a dingy, wallowing vessel entering the pass and knew that the *Maid of Bath* had arrived. She went down to the wharf where she knew it would berth and waited. But long before the poor vessel had been made fast her heart turned to water. She saw the man she had come to claim, on his filthy deck, surrounded by pale half-castes, himself ragged, unshaven, unkempt, haggard and driven by the furies of unavailing remorse, shame and self-contempt.

When his work was done, he dismissed his crew with a wave of the hand and retired to his cabin alone. The little crowd of curious ones dispersed. The wharf became silent, the tide sent up its rank steam from among the rotting piles, and the dust of the street behind eddied over, soiled the water, coated the unpainted schooner and drifted across its cracked decks.

Catching her skirts up in one hand Angela stepped across the narrow plank and upon the deck. Then she went quietly and surely to the open door beyond which a grim, vague figure lolled, bare-chested and forbidding. She filled the aperture and the shadow moved uneasily. A dirty glass fell on the table and a bottle clinked in the rack. She entered.

BEFORE that clean vision John Somers recoiled with an oath. She saw the muscles of his throat work up and down, the nostrils twitch, the hands fumble across the trembling lips. But her voice was clear and untroubled. It was exactly as if she were speaking to a man who was buried all but his eyes; and into them she looked.

"There is time yet," she said. "But we must sail to-night."

He stared at her. "To-night? Where? Who are you?" He rose and leaned toward her wonderingly, repeating it, "*Who are you?*"

"To-night," she said firmly. "You must unload this cargo right away. I have money. We go to-night."

He gathered himself slowly. She saw recognition in his eyes. He became grave. He bowed.

"To-night," she said again. "Oh, you must." She went a step nearer and touched his great forearm timidly. "It's our only chance."

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Angela felt Somers's arms tighten around her and his cheek brush hers as the water roared over them.

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"Our only chance?" he echoed in a loud voice. Then he turned a twisted face to her. "*Your* only chance? Madam, count on me. I'll get you away. Never mind the money. Get away from here for six hours, till I get my Chinese friends' stuff on the wharf and some ballast in, and my water-casks filled and some cabin stores. Trust me, ma'am. I'll get you safe away."

She had won the first bout easily. He had, as she had hoped, taken it for granted that she was in difficulty. He had responded instantly.

But his next question gave her pause: "Maybe it's not exactly convenient for you to go back up-town? Want to stop here? No place for a lady—but you're welcome."

The reek of the cabin stifled her. Every sense revolted against another moment's stay in the fetid atmosphere. But she was afraid of many things. With her at hand he would not fail.

"I'd rather stay here," she murmured.

A moment later she was alone in a fairly clean, empty cabin and a boy had been despatched for her boxes.

She saw no more of Somers till dusk. He had toiled ceaselessly; the hold had been emptied and huge boulders hoisted in for ballast. New hands had come aboard. She had listened with thumping heart to a quarter of an hour's hot argument between Somers and a Chinese merchant, but in the end the man went grumbling away and preparations for sea went on. Just before the sun set a wagon-load of stores had come down and were stowed in the lazarette. She saw that there was much liquor in cases. But at dark Somers knocked on her door.

"Any mail to go ashore, ma'am?" he asked. "The tug is alongside and we haul out in a minute."

"Nothing," she answered through the closed panels, and he went away.

The *Maid of Bath* passed out to sea unnoticed and was swallowed up in the night. When the course was set and the sails trimmed, Somers appeared, bathed, shaved and dressed in clean whites.

"Supper, ma'am," he announced.

DURING that meal he talked easily and unconcernedly, never raising the questionof the reason for her presence aboard the schooner. For a couple of hours afterward she lay in a long chair on the little quarterdeck and watched the stars.

For a week they sailed west and still no word had been spoken of their destination. Land had not been sighted. Somers went about his duties soberly and carefully, though she knew that he was drinking steadily and heavily. But he studiously avoided her except at mealtime or during the first night-watch.

On the eighth evening he said abruptly: "We sight a desert island to-morrow. A good point for a departure, ma'am. Maybe you had better tell me where you want me to take you."

With closed eyes she lay very still and steadied her voice to answer him. "Just what kind of an island is it, Captain?"

"Nothing but a flat expanse of rock and sand, ma'am. There's a spring of water on it, a few trees and bushes and some wild goats, or wild sheep, so they say. Nobody ever lands there. It's out of the trade routes, ma'am."

She asked a few more questions and found that it was inside a reef through which there was a single, narrow pass, difficult of navigation at all times, and impassable in bad weather. Without answering his question she went below after a brief good night.

In the morning she wakened after a few hours' uneasy sleep and went on deck. One of the four native hands was at the wheel, and the *Maid of Bath* was slipping along over a long swell with a light breeze distending her silent topsails. Somers was asleep in a chair by the rail.

Far to starboard Angela distinguished a low shadow against which bright glimmering seas broke. She woke him and said gently: "This is the place."

He leaped up and apologized.

"This is the place," she repeated firmly.

"Here? Ma'am, it's impossible. The island is absolutely barren except for a few trees and some brush and some animals. I couldn't think of it!"

"At least, land me there till I see," she insisted.

AS ARGUMENT proved fruitless, Somers most reluctantly agreed to bring the schooner up and run for the pass in the reef as soon as it was light. She saw that he was strangely disturbed and his questioning glances were turned on her constantly. She waited.

The dawn came like a sudden conflagration and the sky became flame to the zenith. In all this splendor the *Maid of Bath* became small and diminished; the island looked miniature, surrounded by the iridescent sea. Somers changed the course and headed in where a space showed between the lines of leaping breakers on the reef.

For some time they slipped along soundlessly. Presently the boom of the surf rose about them. Somers took the wheel himself and conned the schooner, with two hands forward in the bows and two at the sheets. The deck began to rise and fall with greater liveliness, the blocks of the gear to thump and creak. Angela found it necessary to catch a handhold, and took her stand by Somers's side.

Suddenly it seemed as if the *Maid of Bath* quickened her pace. The breakers rose on either hand, the spray from their crests blowing across the deck. They foamed up the narrow channel and she saw that it swerved to the left sharply. The man beside her grasped the spokes more firmly, waiting for the moment. The hands stood at the sheets with intent eyes turned to their commander.

Somers shouted and bore down on the wheel while the men flew into activity. A great comber rose just ahead. The *Maid of Bath's* long jib-boom began to turn away from it, toward the new channel. And Angela threw her head low and felt Somers's huge hands grasping wildly at her, his voice thundering in her ears. She clung fast.

Suddenly his hands quit their clawing and strong arms lifted her high. The *Maid of Bath* struck with a terrific jar, drove deep into the reef and lay over swiftly. Angela looked up and saw a mountainous wave arching above her and was caught away and crushed against the shrouds. She felt Somers's arms tighten around her and his cheek brush hers as the water roared over them.

When this sea had passed, Somers lowered her to the tilted deck and stared keenly into her face. Then he quietly picked her up and tossed her overside into the smooth water under the lifted bows. An instant later he had joined her, and was dragging her swiftly in toward the beach. She dimly knew that others were in the sea with them, swimming to safety.

Once on the white beach Somers set her on her feet and nodded soberly. "You'll do a while, ma'am. The spring is over yonder, over that rise."

"But you?" she choked. "Where are you going?"

He clipped his words. "Back to the schooner to save what food and stuff I can. There'll be no help for us here."

She saw him walk rapidly back to the water, wade out and let himself go. He swam slowly and watchfully toward the wreck, now veiled in spume, a mere fragment in the breakers. The crew stood on the sand and gazed stolidly out.

At noon Somers had managed to salvage a dozen cases of food, a cask of beef, a couple of barrels of flour, and the members of the crew were gathering what they might from the wreckage alongshore. Angela had in her possession her traveling bag, and one trunk was half sunk in the wet sand at the water's edge.

"Now," Somers said crisply, when he had opened some beef and made tea in a saucepan. "Will you please explain why you wrecked us on this island? You understand, of course, that I know you planned this and knew precisely what you were about. You also understand that the chances of our being picked up within two or three years are so remote as to be worthless."

Controlling herself with a terrible effort, which left her shaking, Angela forced herself to point to a case which Somers had brought ashore after an hour's hard work and instantly broken open.

"When that's gone we'll talk, Captain Somers."

An ugly gleam showed in his eyes and he said nothing in reply. But three days later Angela walked from her chosen retreat among some low bushes to leeward on the island and discovered the four hands to be missing.

To her inquiries Somers returned surlily: "You insisted on this. There's no food for those kanakas, so we repaired the small boat as best we could and I sent 'em off."

"They'll drown!"

Somers smiled. "We'll starve," he responded.

SHE saw during the following days that this was the truth.

The island afforded no food whatever, except the flesh of a few wild sheep, could they kill them. But Angela's thoughts were little on this subject. At last she was face to face with Destiny—and John Somers. They were alone in the midst of a lonely sea, without hope of rescue; for she knew that there was small chance of the frail small boat and its crew ever arriving anywhere.

Somers himself appeared to have settled himself down to a game of patient waiting. He started the day at dawn, made a careful toilet so far as he could, cooked breakfast, called her to it, ate, cleared up after it and then proceeded to the other end of the islet where he was slowly erecting a kind of

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Silently they watched the evening stars come out in the velvet sky.

flagstaff which he formed by splicing short branches and bits of wood together.

The liquor bottles were being emptied very slowly. Angela saw that the man was by no means dependent on alcohol to sustain his spirits or to banish regret. Day by day he showed himself more capable, dignified, alert. And one day she realized that he was drinking no more out of the bottles. If she kept her sworn pact, she would never tell him what was in her heart.

It was a long month after the wreck of the *Maid of Bath* that Angela came to breakfast and met Somers's grave greeting with a smile. "I did you a wrong," she said simply. "I'm sorry."

He responded with a slight tilt of his fine head. She saw that the eyes behind the half-shut lids were clear, steady and piercing. She dropped her gaze thoughtfully.

SUDDENLY he said: "The whole affair is a mystery to me. I remember you perfectly. I saw you first when I came into Habberd's office to report the *Challenger*. Then I saw you in Gimbal's place and you got me that job on the *Porpoise*. It must have been you who put it into those fellows' heads that I was going to be married. I wrote you a letter. Probably you never got it, for I couldn't be sure of the name. Then you turn up in Honolulu and give me to understand that I must get you away before another day. I do. You wreck us on that reef and all the satisfaction I get is a most uncivil reference to a case of bottled goods. Now, what is the answer?"

Angela leaned forward earnestly and her eyes shone. "What's the answer, John Somers? Here." She laid her white hands on her breast with a profound and significant gesture. "When I was a young girl you saved my father's life. He told me about what you did on the sinking *Maximilian*. You were a hero in my eyes. Then I heard your name mentioned as being in Auckland at a time when the men I worked for needed a captain. I went your bond—because you stood for all that was fine and splendid and noble. Then——"

Somers groaned. "Then you saw me."

"Then I saw you," she said gently. "And I wanted to help you. I've always wanted to help you. I did lie to Gimbal & White and tell them you were going to be married—I was the girl."

"You!"

"Yes! I went home and dreamed that you quit being wicked and worthless and made good and came back—to me. Instead you disappeared. Oh!" She choked back a sob and bowed her head.

She became presently aware that he was staring at her with a new expression on his face. "The rest is written down—printed in papers—clear to the end!" she finished breathlessly, swept herself up and went to her trunk and came back with a little packet. He took it timidly, with unfeigned reluctance.

"Read it!" she stormed.

For an hour he bent over the clippings, the memoranda of the private agents, the minute details she had gleaned about his life. Then he came on the story of the marriage license, the story of the wedding, the mockingly bright last paragraph about a bride sailing to join her sailor husband. He did not look up. He sat still and silent, like an image in the white sand of that desert islet, surrounded by the desolate and gleaming sea. The faint breeze brushed his curling hair and dried the pearls of sweat that stood out in drops of agony on his brown forehead. Angela crouched apart, her eyes stony, her lips bloodless.

HE SHATTERED the quiet. "Then," he croaked, "you are my wife."

She made no response.

Somers moved slightly. "When did you marry—marry me?"

"Oh!" she sobbed.

"You made a game of it," he went on. "What a game! And you couldn't find me at the last, and so you went right on and played the game alone and said you were married to me, and took my name and came down here." His eyes flared over her an instant. "You are young and beautiful and clean and fine. Any man might be proud. But it—it is too late!"

She sprang to her feet at those sinister and ominous words. "Too late? Too late?" she cried.

"Too late," he muttered, and glanced around as if for some place to flee.

Angela gulped. Her eyes were filled with pleading. "You despise me!"

"Not I!" he answered sharply. "I despise myself. And all this time I never dreamed that—I might have had *you*."

A maddening terror seized her. She lifted herself stiffly and closed her eyes in torture. He saw the lines of agony trace themselves in her face.

"Then—there's some one else—another woman?"

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Before her blind eyes Somers's lips formed a hasty "No!" but no sound came. He rose and walked quietly away, struggling with himself. His hands clenched, his muscles tightened under the terrific strain of his unworthy longing. He conquered and his voice came from his lips in a smooth drawl.

"The chief thing now is to devise some way of getting you off this island and back to civilization," he said.

"Answer me!" she pleaded. "Is there—is there another woman—a—a wife?"

"What if there is?" he returned calmly, but his face was hot.

Angela stamped her foot. "Yes or no?"

Before he could frame a response she opened her eyes, flushing magnificently. He drew back as she confronted him. Her bosom heaved wildly and the color in her bare throat flowed upward. She spoke in such a tone as Somers had never heard before.

"What if there is?" she cried. "What of it? Who is she—compared with me? What are you to her? A hero, as you are to me? Does she know what I know? What can she give you that I can't? Can you remember her when I am before you? Or think of her when I am near? Has she loved you years—as I've loved you? Has she given you all, as I've given? Has she—has she bought you, as I have bought you, with my tears and my days and my nights and my youth and my life and my honor? Tell me, once and for all, whose are you? Hers or mine?" She held out her arms and the splendor of her eyes flamed over him. "Tell me now, John Somers! Are you mine? It's not too late—while I am here."

She was poised as if to flee, lightly balanced (as it seemed to him) between the winds of fate. His self-vanquishment was futile. His attempt to save her from his worthless lot of mischance and misery had gone for naught. His voice broke hoarsely.

"No! Nobody else but you! There never was!" His passion abased him. His voice died in his throat. "I adore you!" he muttered, and looked away, shamefaced, humbly.

WHEN he lifted his eyes to hers, the shimmering loveliness of them blinded him. He read in their clear depths that his world had been swept away, burned up in the fire of her tremendous self-abnegation; a new world had come. In amazement he drew himself up, slowly, towering above her, imperious and masterful. And in silence they forgot the sailless sea, the barren island, the future without hope of rescue, the shattered beef casks falling to staves in the sun, the empty tins that mocked all earthly passion. Neither moved. Then Angela caught her breath in a swift sob and fled.

He found her at dusk where she crouched on a little lift of the beach, just beyond the wash of the waves. She glanced up at him with an inscrutable look, searching and profound.

"How young you are!" he whispered.

Angela laughed, low and huskily. "Young? I've loved for years and years!"

Somers bent nearer. "And are you content—to be my wife?"

She gave him no other response than an almost imperceptible faint movement.

Silently they watched the evening stars come out in the velvet sky. At the zenith a raveling of cloud reflected for an instant the last ray of the departed sun and then faded into the depths of the overarching vault. The wind sighed across the islet with a breath moist and fragrant, whispered in the bushes and died away. Their hands found each other.

"We will build our house on a hill above the Golden Gate," he muttered, "then when I'm coming home you can stand on the porch and wave to me and our ship."

"Our ship?" she murmured.

"Our ship," Somers repeated firmly. "A big boy, a liner, all white decks and brass work, with our own pennant at the truck. And our house, with the plate on the step telling the peddlers to keep off. Our dog lying in the sun and our cat by the kitchen fire." He drew a deep breath.

"When?" she whispered dreamily.

Far out at sea a spark of light kindled, threaded faintly upward, suddenly shot a cluster of stars into the sky. Somers leaped to his feet and tore off his thin jacket and held it high. He scratched a match and set fire to it. The cotton blazed up furiously a moment; and smoldering tissue floated off downwind.

"There's the cutter *Polar Bear*," he said slowly. "The boys reached port and sent help. Six weeks from now we'll be home—Mr. and Mrs. John Somers."

She crept up into his arms, and cheek to cheek they watched a second rocket soar high and break into a bright constellation above the single broken spar that marked the wreck of the *Maid of Bath* and the end of John Somers's casting away.

Here Are Ladies!

Elmer Davis

A YOUNG Columbia professor, scion of a family of educators and a bachelor of blameless reputation, plans to spend his vacation in New York City writing a book, and instead puts in an eventful summer entertaining ladies—some by choice, some perforce, and some through ill-omened circumstance.

The amusing adventures of Professor Deupree and the hazardous course of his delightful romance make a lively story, crowded with humorous situations and peopled with interesting characters who involve the hero in a maze of complications.

There is a high-spirited young heiress guarded by a dour and ever-vigilant chaperon, a frivolous wife who deserts her husband for a career, a scheming married cousin, a handsome widow with a train of admirers, and various and sundry auxiliary fair ones who force on their helpless guide, confidant and companion a continuous program of entertaining and wooing, placating and explaining, denying and dodging.

The author of "I'll Show You the Town," which begins in Everybody's for September, is Elmer Davis, a New York newspaper man who in this, his first serial, has written a story that is filled to overflowing with sheer entertainment.

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Charles was just in time to be preferred and first occupant of the shell-hole, for almost immediately an avalanche lit upon his back.

The Scoop *of* Charles Hamilton Potts

By James Hopper

PART II

AFTER a little while he was startled by a noise behind him, by clods of earth rolling down upon him, and looking up, he saw men straddling the trench, then going on. They were machine-gun men. Some bore the guns, like medieval trombloons, some bore tripods, and others boxes of ammunition, like suitcases, one in each hand. When they had passed, Charles, reassured, stepped upon a firing-step and peered over the parapet. And there was K Company and his interview deployed before him.

They had not gone so very far; they were still quite near. The machine-gun men behind them seemed a part of their grouping now; together they made a loose mass of men, in a sort of disorderly order, walking slowly, with small steps, across the flat—and to the right, continuously, were other masses like theirs—the whole regiment, or nearly, Charles guessed. It did not look like anything—just a lot of men walking slowly across a plain. "By Jove, I can catch up to them," Charles thought, regaining his fixed idea. "I'll get that interview yet." And before, almost, he knew it, was out and away.

Once out, though, he felt extremely out,

THE STORY

Charles Hamilton Potts is a reporter for the Bolinas *Herald*, California, and has attained a certain celebrity through his column of local news. When the great war comes he is unable to get in the army on account of physical disability, but he persuades the editor to let him go to France. He aims to send back interviews with all the Californians he can reach. He is an inconspicuous figure in the group of big newspaper men, but they, learning of his thirst for home items, send him as a joke after one *"Cute" Cunningham*, of San José. Daunted by nothing, he starts off for Company "K," Twenty-eighth Infantry, and enters the trench just as the men are going over the top. He is bewildered, and fears he has lost his chance of an interview with "Cute."

and it was bent in two that he advanced. The earth seemed not flat, but rounded, and in so curious a fashion that he was always at the highest point of the humping. Above him, that canopy of shrieking steel seemed so low that if he stood up straight his head would surely be taken off. Now and then he saw a shell drop—but always at such intervals, and so far, it made little impression on him. Now and then also, a short whisper—ps-s-s-ps-s-s— passed by, but this did not bother him much either, for he did not know what whispered. It was a pretty grand sight, he thought vaguely, the main part of his mind intent upon his job, upon getting his interview—that great wall of smoke ahead, rising to the sky, heavy with earth at the bottom, vapory light on top, and alive all through, pulsating and crackling. And that mass of men, spread out on the plain, walking so slowly, so calmly, but upright; so straight, so tall—those boys looked like giants! The sun, peering over the curtain of smoke, struck all those things they carried and made them shine!

"Geewhilikens!" The exclamation had been rung from him by a shift in the scene. The great curtain had lifted; a small corner of it—the lower right-hand corner—had lifted as if it had been a theatre-curtain, and in that small corner a village appeared, flat and unreal, like cardboard scenery, burned and blackened. Above everything a great roof-rafter flamed, went

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out, pulsed red again, then pulverized to ashes. He saw the men before the village vanish within it. But the men in front of him were going on, leaving it to their right. He hurried on after them.

Now, out of the ground ahead of him, like rabbits out of a warren, little men popped and came running toward him. They were little men, all bent up and shriveled; they wore funny little round caps upon their heads, and they ran eagerly toward Charles, their hands up in the air. "By Heck, they're Germans!" thought Charles of a sudden. He did not know what to do, he did not even think what he should do, but stood there, a grin upon his face, because they were so funny. They did not run, they actually loped in their eagerness, and not only held their hands up, but held them up with continuous small propitiatory movements as if they had been displaying pretty objects for sale. Charles remembered some sort of a picture in which explorers, standing magnificently on a discovered shore, await savages who are coming toward them with great marks of humility and dread—and unconsciously straightened himself in the superb posture of the chromo's central white man. But doughboys came running now from right and left, and began to herd the funny galloping Germans. Charles joined in the chase gleefully, cavorting as though he had been a cowboy on a horse, rounding the prisoners up as if they had been cows in a corral. Finally the pack had their game going the right way, running swiftly toward the rear. Charles followed a hundred feet, having a great time, whirling his right hand over his head lariat fashion—then stopped abruptly and soberly. He remembered his interview.

HE TURNED about, faced the battle, and hurried after it. K was still advancing at its measured pace behind the barrage, leaving the village to its right, and he had no trouble gaining upon it. Soon he was up with the machine-gun men, plodding slowly under their heavy burdens, and only the infantry was before him. He was catching up. But the whole thing disappeared.

They had fallen like reaped wheat. For a moment, stupefied, he stood up, the sole erect figure on the field, then discretion threw him down in turn with nose in the dirt. The line rose again before him; it ran forward at full speed for perhaps fifty feet, went down once more, and with it Charles rose, ran and went down. Three times this was repeated, and each time, sedulously aping, Charles sprang, trotted, and went down. Then they were not rising any more, but staying down, and Charles crawled. Crawling, he came in among them, and they were all digging; tense as fox-terriers, digging with their short shovels, each man his hole.

What so far had been such a picnic now passed smoothly into something more serious. Shells began to fall upon the position, and death whispers passed. Charles saw a boy crumple slowly where he crouched, another turned on his back with a sigh.

Charles hugged the ground. He wanted to dig too, but he had nothing but his hands, his feet and his fountain pen. Things he had read about the war, though, were coming to his mind with all the utility of practical knowledge. He saw near him an old shell-hole, and crawled head first into it. He was just in time to be preferred and first occupant, for almost immediately an avalanche lit upon his back, made up of sharp knees, sharper elbows, hobnails and much iron equipment.

For a moment Charles thought it was a bomb, thought he was dead. But there was no immobility about what lay upon him. His back was being used as a fulcrum for vigorous disengaging efforts. These succeeded at length, and the thing rolled off and lay by Charles's side. Followed an abrupt attempt to get underneath Charles, but this ceased almost as quickly as begun. Charles opened an eye and gradually peered outside of the guard of his bent arms; a doughboy lay beside him breathing heavily. His helmet was askew, the strap around one ear, his face was very red and sweaty where it showed through the mud, and his whole uniform was sprinkled with spots such as are made by rain upon dust—only these were a rusty-brown. They were blood.

Lying tight at the bottom, the two looked at each other, each with one eye. A shell burst somewhere above, and both eyes vanished within grimy sleeves. When the commotion had gone, the eyes came out and fixed each other. "'Xcuse me," said the doughboy, "didn't know you was there."

"That's all right," said Charles, answering politeness with politeness.

"Some fine hole!" said the doughboy, looking about him appraisingly.

"It was the nearest," said Charles, honestly waiving the implied and unearned compliment.

They lay still, very close, and liking the feeling of each other's ribs. But the doughboy in a minute said: "Gee, I forget; this ain't no Sunday," and put himself to work. He dug the bottom of the hole out till it was nice and flat, then, working from down up, only the tip of his shovel showing outside, and none of himself, raised a little parapet. Upon this, carefully, like a child putting away its small treasures—a marble, a bit of string—he laid side by side, and handy, four grenades and a dozen cartridge-clips. He slipped his rifle out between them "There, let the —— —— —— come!" he said, with heavy satisfaction.

But they didn't come, nothing came, nothing but invisible, shrieking things that burst all about, raining mud and stones down upon them, while fragments twanged by on trajectories as tense as a banjo-string.

The doughboy raised his head discreetly over the parapet. Whang-ang—there was a resonance as of a full-ringed bell in a shooting gallery—and the helmet, still vibrating, leaped off his head. He looked for it behind him as he hugged the bottom once more, recovered it, gave it the look one gives, upon going out, to a disreputable but beloved old hat, to see if it really can go one more day, and put it back on his head. "I swear I didn't raise my head more 'an a quarter of an inch," he cried with hurt rage. "I leave it to you, now," he appealed to Charles. "I didn't raise my head more 'an a quarter of an inch—and that sucker gets me!" He stretched his neck, let go a clipful of his rifle toward Germany, said "There!" and lay still once more. Upon further cogitation, however, he got to work again and cut a depression, like the lower half of a loophole, in the parapet for his rifle. "Now let them come!" he said again with satisfaction.

BUT they didn't come, and it was dreary waiting. Whiz-zz-zz—Bang! Whiz-z-z-z—Bang! The earth shaking, or coming down about their ears in chaos, and their little hole rocking and trembling like a small boat in a big storm. Charles was sweating blood. Charles's head held just one idea—that if ever he got out of this place (and this place felt a million miles and a thousand years away from the good normal little life from which he had come) he'd never, never! be caught in one like it again.

"Got anything to drink?" the doughboy asked suddenly.

"Only water," said Charles, who, although a teetotaler, felt now dimly that the colorless and odorless liquid was not quite up to the situation.

"That's what I mean," said the doughboy. "Wasn't expecting Old Crow. Pass it along—mine's got a hole in it."

Charles passed his canteen, and with this act of giving something, and watching the clear cool liquid gurgling into the doughboy's dry mouth, felt his great fear somewhat diminish. The hard bursts all about seemed less hard and his nerves less tight.

"What's your name?" said the doughboy, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand and directing a friendly look at Charles. "You're one of them newspaper guys, ain't you?"

"Yes," said Charles. "My name is Charles Hamilton Potts. What's yours?"

"Jack—oh, here they come!"

To a general crackling of rifles and machine guns all about, he rose to his rifle and began letting it go swiftly. Charles, with a horrid wrench at his heart, raised his head above the parapet. He had just time to see much smoke and things crawling beneath the smoke, when a sharp catlike sound right by his cheek threw him to the bottom once more. And it was there, from the bottom of the shell-hole, that he saw the whole performance—that is, saw his doughboy friend shooting away clip after clip, his eye steady and intent—the only thing calm in the general agitation, the leaping of the gun, and the uproar. At

His idea of nothing doing was a relative one. Shells were dropping about lazily, but hardly benignly.

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a certain moment the doughboy dropped his gun, and seizing one by one all his grenades, hurled them before him like a baseball player. He followed this by a terrific peppering of his rifle, then seemingly unable to control his enthusiasm at what he saw—which Charles did not see—leaped out upon the parapet, waving his weapon on high, while his open and distorted mouth showed him to be emitting a blood-curdling yell. Like a cat he sprang back into the shell-hole and said, all in one word:

"Jesuschristtheypinkedme!"

"Where?" said Charles anxiously. "Where?"

The doughboy did not answer. Sitting at the bottom of the hole, his legs before him, he fished into his pockets and drew out two huge clasp-knives. "Always carry those around," he explained. "Saw a guy burned to death because he couldn't get his clothes off fast enough." He sank the point of one of the blades into the cloth of his breeches, at the right thigh, and cut the cloth. Some extraordinarily dirty underwear came to the light, and he cut that—and beneath was a small bluish hole. "There's the—" he said, using a word which was of correct use in the sixteenth century, but is not in these flabby times. He examined it with interest, then, as if making up his mind to take a chance, kicked his leg out. The result seemed to please him; he grinned. "Hell," he said lightly, "this ain't nothing. Didn't touch the old soup-bone—didn't come anywheres near it—and tain't bleeding. Hell, I'm all right!"

His pleased eye fell upon Charles. "Say, you got it too, partner," he said. "Say, it just grazed your cheek—a regular Gillette-razor kind!"

Charles touched a spot on his cheek which was stinging him a bit, and his fingers, when he looked at them, held a small smear of blood. He was wounded—he, Charles Hamilton Potts, late of Bolinas, California. No, this must be a dream!

A lull had followed the late burst. Few shells were falling now. A man came crawling head first into the hole. "Hello, Cap," said the doughboy pleasantly.

The captain of K company was a red-headed lad no older than the doughboy. He took in the hole at one glance and said: "I want you boys to dig. This is the position we're going to hold. Dig to both sides and connect up with the others holes. The engineers will be up to-night, and then we'll be all hunky-dory. Meanwhile dig. Dig like hell."

HE WAS leaving when he noticed the doughboy's posture. "Hello," he said, "are you hurt?"

"The suckers pinked me in the leg, sir."

"Can you walk?"

The doughboy looked about him meditatively. "I tell you, Cap," he answered, "if I could stand up, I could tell, but this here hole is so situated you can't stand up without having your head blow away."

"Well," said the captain, "I'll send some one to you when I can. Meanwhile, you can dig." His eye fell upon Charles's white brassard. But, perhaps because it was no longer white but very much another color, it failed to impress him. "You dig too," he said, as he crawled out on his way down the line.

There was a long silence after he had gone, and the doughboy said: "Well, we'd better begin digging."

He crawled to the right lip of the crater, lifted himself, and took a quick squint. His face as it turned back toward Charles held a look of satisfaction. "There's another hole right handy," he said, "with another guy in it, I *think*.

"You ain't got no gun," he went on artlessly, "so you better dig. I'll watch that the suckers don't come in on us. You dig."

Being presented with the shovel, Charles obediently began to dig. He had never dug much in his life, and this was very hard work. His hands were soon raw, sweat poured down his nose and made his safety-razor wound sting. On the other hand, he found that, toiling thus, he forgot other more unpleasant things—the shells, for instance. The blood surging through his veins gave him a sensation of wellbeing which had been far from him ever since he had hit this shell-hole, a feeling of—of intrepidity, that was it, of intrepidity. Had a German showed above the rim of the shell-hole at that instant, Charles would have slammed him over the head with his shovel.

"That's enough," the doughboy shouted after a while. "Let the other sucker do some of the work."

THE "other sucker" evidently did, for suddenly the side of the hole caved in, a begrimed and sweating face looked in, then vanished.

"Now, the other side," the doughboy directed, giving Charles the direction after a rapid peep.

Charles, almost dead, dug on that side, till finally there was a cave-in and a begrimed face reflected his—upon which the owners of both faces retreated each into the depths of his hole.

The doughboy searched his pockets and drew out of them a little dirty bag and a miniature book. "The makings," he said, throwing them to Charles.

Charles never smoked, but now he felt that it was eminently fitting he should smoke. In fact, he felt it would be a sacrilege not to smoke. More than that; looking back at his past life, he knew it had been at least half wasted because he had not smoked, and at least ninety-nine per cent. wasted because of the other things he had not done. He tore a little page from the little book and dropped upon it some of the dust that was in the bag, as he had seen others do. But seeing is not doing; his unskilled fingers broke the thin paper, dropped the tobacco.

"Here, give it here."

The doughboy rolled a cigaret, licked it, passed it to Charles, and rolled himself one. He struck a spark from his lighter, fanned the fuse, and passed the glowing end to Charles, who lit his cigaret. The doughboy lit his. He gave a quick look overboard, then slid down to the bottom of the hole, his back to the parapet, his knees hunched. "Nothing doing, we c'n smoke."

His idea of nothing doing was a relative one. Shells were still dropping about, lazily, perhaps, in comparison, yet hardly benignly. But Charles was finding out for the second time that occupation, was the greater thing. Just as, a moment past, the vigorous wielding of a shovel had brought him a modicum of oblivion and comfort, so now this adventure of the first smoke was bringing him solace. One thought drew out another. He had been terrorized when a mere infant by a "talk" delivered to the schoolroom by the President of the Anti-Tobacco League. Now, guessing just at what point he would feel sick took the place of the business of guessing where the next shell would fall.

"What's your name?" asked the doughboy, resuming a conversation begun and interrupted some time before.

"Charles Hamilton Potts. What is yours?"

"Jack Cunningham."

"Cunningham! Say, you're not 'Cute' Cunningham, are you?"

"Sure. That's what the buddies call me. How'd you guess it?"

"No—but really—is your name Cunningham—'Cute' Cunningham, Company K, Twenty-eighth Infantry?"

"It sure is. 'Cute' Cunningham, K Company, Twenty-eighth!"

"Well, I'll be horn-beswaggled! You're just the man I was looking for!"

"Looking! For me?" There was a slight alarm in the doughboy's tone. "Say, you ain't no bill collector, is you?"

"No, no. I simply want to interview you."

"Interview! What's that?" cried Cunningham, not at all reassured. "You're going to interview *me?*"

"Yes. For the paper. You're the man, ain't you, who took three Germans last week?"

Cunningham threw back his head and laughed, evidently much relieved. "I sure did," he said. "Three of 'em. I did have four, but one long slim sucker had a grenade up his arm. I saw him slide it down to his palm, and got 'm between the eyes. There was another one was a little bit of an old runt—so I guess all I got was two and a half!"

CHARLES was delighted. Here was the real thing, told in real racy form—a "peach" of a story. "Your correspondent sat in a shell-hole the other day with 'Cute' Cunningham. You don't know Cute, do you? Well, he is at present the hero of the United States Army. Cute went over on No Man's Land the other night and came back in the morning with three Huns. Cute says how it made only two and a half, seeing as how the third was a little bit of a fellow. Cute, who is one of our local boys, living in San José at——"

Here Charles found that he did not have all his data. "What's your address?" he asked, taking out his little note-book and wetting his pencil.

"K Company, Twenty-eighth Infantry, A. E. F., France," said Cute.

"No. I mean your home address. Your address back in the States."

"Oh—I'm from——"

But just then, as though it had been crouched all of the time beneath the lip of the crater and now had stretched its long neck within, an invisible monster went "Whoof!" and dialog and speakers went sailing up in the air.

Charles did not feel himself come down, nor did he feel himself land, but he began to feel himself afterward, and rather dolorously. He also heard himself—he was groaning, great, deep, heart-rending groans. He tried to stop this, but seemed to have no control of the matter. That

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part of his machinery which was the center of himself was groaning, and he had nothing to do with it. Had Charles played football in his youth, he would have recognized the symptoms as those going with what is called having one's wind knocked out of one. They abated presently; the groans diminished, finally ceased, and he was breathing naturally once more and able to take stock. He was lying on his back in the open, his face to the sky.

. "That's funny," he thought. "What am I doing here? Must have gone to sleep in the garden. Or on the wharf. Guess it's the wharf. I hear the *Bedelia's* whistle." The *Bedelia's* whistle passed with a sound of ripping silk, seemingly only a few inches from his nose—and Charles abruptly knew where he was, and with instantaneous discretion set himself to rolling. He rolled till the rolling found a hole and took him to its very bottom. "I wonder if this is our hole," Charles thought dazedly. "If it is, it has changed since I left it."

The shell-hole, in fact, was much altered. Another one had formed, twin to it; it had destroyed the parapet and had forced part of its circumference within. The floor was now all littered up and alarmingly raised by a layer of glistening clods.

SOME of the clods began to stir, and Cunningham, who had been of them, disengaged himself and sat up. He wiped the earth out of his eyes, spit the earth out of his mouth, held his head in his hands as one holds the pendulum of a clock when one wants to stop it, and began to take stock of himself. The inventory proceeded satisfactorily till he got to the lower part of his anatomy, when he became vocal. "They got it again!" he cried. "The same leg! Oh, they got me in the leg again, the blankity-blank, blank, blank, blank, blank, blank, blank suckers!"

With horror Charles saw that, while his companion's left leg lay straight, with heel in the soil and toe pointed upward, the other lay flaccid, with a strange, sickening twist. "Oh, geewhilikens! Oh, geewhilikens!" he cried. "What can I do for you, pard; what can I do, what can I do?"

The doughboy shut his eyes, to Charles's increased alarm. Charles crawled up and drew the boy's wide shoulders across his lap.

The eyes opened again. "I tell you, partner," said the doughboy, "get me a drink."

But where was a drink? Charles looked about him. The canteen was gone; everything was gone.

"Got a first-aid package?" the doughboy whispered.

But Charles had no first-aid package. It had never occurred to him to carry a first-aid package.

"In my pocket," the doughboy murmured with his husky voice. "In the back pocket of my pants!"

Charles, his heart beating with fear lest he jar the wounded boy, searched the pocket gingerly, and with infinite care drew out of it at length a little tin box which looked like a can of tobacco. "Open it," he heard.

It was of soft zinc and supposed to be opened easily; but it wasn't, and Charles tore his nails upon it. He succeeded at last. A dressing, all ready, was inside; he must put it on—but how put it on?

Welcome interruption just then crawled into the hole. It was the red-headed captain, weary and begrimed but cheerful. "Hello!" he said. "How are you boys making it?"

"He's wounded," said Charles, pointing to Cunningham.

"They got my leg again!" the doughboy flared, suddenly regaining most of his energy. "The blankity blank blanks! The dirty suckers! They got my leg again—the same leg, sir!"

The captain crawled to him and examined the leg. "Gee, that's funny!" he remarked. "That's funny."

"What's funny?" said Cunningham, rather at variance with this opinion.

"Why, you're not wounded, you're not wounded at all!"

"I ain't wounded?" Cunningham protested indignantly.

"Oh, your leg's broken all right, if that's what you mean! But there's no wound—no tear—no blood—just a break. What you fellows been doing, anyway?"

"We went up in the air, sir," Charles explained.

"Well, 'Cute,'" the captain said, "I guess you broke your leg coming down. If you had come down on your head, you would have broken your neck, so you're lucky. Here," he said to Charles, "pass me that gun."

Charles passed the remains of the doughboy's rifle—a split, battered stock—and the captain, applying it to the doughboy's leg, bound it tight to it with the bandages from the first-aid package. "There, that will hold you for a while, Cute," he said when he had finished. "I'll send some one as soon as I can"—and, like a boat taking a swell, crawled over the crater-lip and out of sight.

"THEM Froggies," said Cunningham meditatively, "when they are wounded, they just yell like hell till they are picked up. Then, when they are picked up, they light a cigaret, and grin, and don't give a d—n. I guess the cap will send some one all right, though."

"Oh, surely," said Charles. "The captain is a man of his word."

"Eh?" said Cunningham.

Charles's trust in the captain was rewarded. In a little while a boy with a red cross on his arm came crawling in, then dragged a folded stretcher in after him. "Where's the guy what's wounded?" he asked, looking about him.

"Here!" cried Cunningham alertly, and "Here," said Charles, pointing.

"How are you, partner?" said the bearer, laying out his stretcher. "Think you can make the riffle all right? It's some stormy out there!"

"I'm kinder tired of this here hole," said Cute Cunningham. "Where's your buddy?"

"Oh, *he's* going back on a stretcher hisself. Guess I'll have to *drag* you back."

At these words, Charles, who was as anxious to get out of here as he ever had been, and just as resolute never to come back as he ever had been, saw a great white light. "*I'll* carry the other end," he offered.

The stretcher-bearer gave him a black look. "Ain't you supposed to stay here?" he asked stolidly.

"Not by a jugful," said Charles with animation. "I'm just a newspaper fellow. Can go back whenever I want to. Fact is, I *got* to go back. I've got an interview to write!"

"He's a newspaper guy all right," Cunningham put in.

"Well, all right," said the stretcher-bearer. "Take hold of the other end."

He was already harnessing himself to the shafts at one end. Charles, at his end, passed the sling over his shoulder. "Up!" said the stretcher-bearer, and snapped himself to his full height. Charles rose staggeringly. "Come on," said the stretcher-bearer, and, without more ado, walked out of the shell-hole.

CHARLES, tied to him inexorably by the stretcher, climbed out after him: twice he slipped and almost fell before he gained the crater's lip. Right away, almost, and dreadfully, there came to him an evil premonition; it was going to be much harder than it had promised before he began. He had volunteered so gladly, he had started out so blithely; now sweat already was pearling his brow. That boy Cunningham was terribly heavy. There never had been a boy as terribly heavy as this. And the weight had not shown in his form before they started; Charles was taken with an obscure resentment at this deceit.

But all this was merely a fugitive impression almost immediately effaced by a more vivid one, *i. e.*, how *outside* it felt outside the shell-hole. Never in all his life had Charles felt so out-of-doors. It was as though he had been naked; the sensation was akin to that felt in a dream when one finds oneself at a brilliant ball with insufficient clothing—of nether clothing; there was something of mistake, of scandal about it. Iron things were buzzing and bursting about. To one, Charles bowed; to another, to a third. Then he noticed the great form of his brother carrier ahead of him, going on down the field with head erect and shoulders square, imperturbably as a juggernaut—and fixed his eyes upon him and tried to go as he did, impassive and unbowed. But he had no sooner attained this form when suddenly no one was before him; he stood alone, holding up his end, the stretcher at a slant with Cunningham's head down. A great concussion whirled him half around—it occurred to him to drop.

There, on the ground, it was good. It did not feel so outside, and the cramp in one's wrists gradually loosened; Charles did not hurry about getting up. But the stretcher-bearer to whom he was now inexorably linked was up on his knees, the sling about his shoulders, all ready; he had to go. He passed the sling over his head, took hold of the handles.

"Say," the brother stretcher-bearer shouted, rather gruffly, "you keep your eyes on me, see? Keep your lamps on me, and when I ducks, you ducks, see? Don't stay up there like a candlestick. Duck, and duck pronto!"

With this admonition in his ears Charles rose once more and proceeded. But now it was the first feeling, that of which from the first he had had foreboding, which returned and gradually seized all of him, and made of the flying shells a vague phenomenon which no longer held his attention. His attention was now altogether on his hands. They were around the handles of the stretcher, but they were threatening to let go. "O Lord, O Lord,"

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With glazed eyes looking straight over the paper, body cataleptic, he fixed the scene of yesterday while his fingers slapped it on the typewriter.

every fiber of Charles was saying, "I can't hold on any longer, I can't, I can't." And his eye upon his burden was taking on a malevolent glaze. He knew he should feel sorry and pitying; but really, when one is being carried about in this way, one doesn't just sprawl, making oneself as heavy as possible, as heavy as rocks, as heavy as lead; one does something to help, holds oneself up some way; one doesn't just sprawl like a sack of potatoes! An irresistible irritation was taking possession of Charles. But soon there was no room in him for even that, there was room only for one process of the mind—a command to hold on, together with a despairing sense of having to let go. "O Lord, O Lord, I can't hold on any longer, I can't——"

A CONVENIENT shell, dropping conveniently near, rescued him deliciously for the nonce. Down went everything—stretcher-bearer, stretcher and stretched. The latter was vocal: "Say, for God's sake, when you fellows drop me, don't drop me like a ton of bricks!" But Charles was not saying anything—only panting, and tasting, like an epicurean, the delicio-dolorous release of his wrists. Also, he thought he knew now what was the matter. The sling was too long, all the weight had been borne by his arms. He lengthened the sling. His inexorable partner was already ready. On they went.

It was fine now! That was all that had been the matter before: the sling had been too long. Now it was short. Why, there was hardly any weight on the arms now, nor on the wrists; his fingers curled around the handles easily—what a snap! Only—only, really, they should have made that sling wider. The strap cut into one's neck so. Gee! all the weight was on his neck now. What a weight, too! And the ground underneath was very rough. Shell-holes, old trenches, wires! Golly, but that was heavy across his neck; he couldn't *breathe*. Gee! that had been much better when the sling had been too long—much easier. "O Lord, O Lord, I can't go any farther, I can't, I can't!"

No shell this time came to his rescue. As if by some diabolical arrangement, they were now all dropping far. Charles had to cry quits—with the remnants of his strength, he let out a piteous squawk as he dropped to his knees.

Thus it was, with many stops, some induced by dropping shells, others by letting go, that Charles sweated and sobbed his way to the rear. He kept changing the sling. Sometimes he got it too long, sometimes he got it too short, but he never did get it right; and sometimes the weight was all across his poor thin neck, sometimes all upon his spindle wrists. But through all the ebbs and flows of his misery he held to one thought as the consolation which enabled him to wear through his torture—thought of the great story he was coming back with, of his interview with "Cute" Cunningham.

And finally they came to the lee of a hill where reserves were gathered, and four husky doughboys took the stretcher while Charles trotted alongside very happily. The way to the first-aid station lay along a draw. To the left the Germans were sweeping a road with shrapnel—but this now was nothing to the inured Charles. He trotted alongside the stretcher, happy; now and then he touched Cunningham's hand. He was out of it all, and he had a story—a great story. "Saw 'Cute' Cunningham the other day. He's some boy, is 'Cute.' He's the one who took the first prisoners of our war, etc., etc."

At the dressing-station he hovered patiently about while Cute was being "fixed up," not wishing to bother him during this rather harrowing ordeal. But when the doughboy lay at last on his stretcher with leg reset, smoking a cigaret with some ease, all ready for the little trepidating ambulance backing up toward him, Charles put to him once more the question which, worded before, had gone unanswered each time because of war's interruptions, and which was the final and necessary data for his story. "What's your address, Cute?" he asked, pencil and little book in hand.

"K COMPANY, Twenty-eighth Infantry," said Cute promptly.

"No—I mean your home address. Where you lived before you enlisted? Your street and number?"

"35 Minnie Street."

"35 Minnie Street," Charles wrote, and as he wrote: "Didn't know there was a Minnie Street in San José," he remarked.

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"Saint Nosay, do you say?" said the doughboy, interested.

"Yes. Didn't know there was a Minnie Street in San José."

"Saint Nosay your grandmother! *I'm* from Chi!"

"Chi?" Charles echoed stupidly.

"Sure. Chi, Chi, Chicago—down by the stock-yards!"

"Here, here, hold on! Are you all right now, are you all right?"

A rough but helping hand was on Charles's shoulder, a raucous but kindly voice was bawling in his ear. "Yes, yes, sir, I'm—I'm all right," he said weakly.

He was still dizzy when, a moment later, just as a tray of loaves is shoved in the oven, Cute Cunningham was slid into the little ambulance, which immediately was off at top speed. "So long!" Cute shouted from the right top bunk, waving his good foot, his head and arms being out of sight. "So long!" Charles cried, as loud as he had any strength to do. The ambulance left the edge of the wood and went streaking along a white road.

"Chi-ca-go," said Charles heavily. "And all that work for nothing!"

THE next day, back at the town of Press Headquarters, Charles awoke very late, discouraged and listless, and went out without knowing just what he was going to do with himself. A glance into the court of the inn, in passing, showed him that all the cars were out—a welcome knowledge, for he had not the heart to face the laughter and the gibes of his fellow-men. The more, in fact, he thought about the trick played upon him, the more his memory turned up for him the details of the manner in which he had been "kidded" into believing Cute Cunningham was from San José whereas he was from Chicago, the less he wanted to see any one ever again. His only boon this dull morning lay in the fact that, having got up so very late, he had saved the price of breakfast—a detail not to be sneezed at at all in the narrow state of his finances. Coming to the small shop which had been taken over for the Press Headquarters, he turned into it. No one was there with the exception of one. The Press officers and censors were out. The one within was a correspondent, but one of special ilk, and he was sitting in a corner, busily fighting a typewriter. To tell of this correspondent, a revision is necessary of things told before. Speaking of the division into Accredited and Visiting Correspondents, it has been stated that the latter were to the former as an abyss is to a shining peak—which was true, but true only with the inevitable exception.

The exception lay in the fact that some correspondents were Visiting because they did not deign to be Accredited. They were again to the Accredited as the Accredited were to the common Visiting. They were the few Great Big Bugs of Press and Magazine. They lived mostly in New York and now and then made a flying visit—a sort of a week-end visit—to the war. They had the genius of perspective, the talent of synthesis; they gave the war one eagle glance—then went back home and wrote tons. The correspondent sitting here was one of these—in fact, was the biggest of them all. He was an immense fat man who gave an erroneous impression of great indolence—or was indolent in the manner of the lever, who lets other things be fulcrums or fulcra—and he liked to let his heavy features hang loosely, in idiotic vacuity, while behind this loose flapping curtain the tight mind worked like a boiler factory. At present he was sitting inert, his two hands on his two knees, a giant cigar in the corner of his mouth, directing at his typewriter a look of utter distaste. Charles slipped sideways across the room, sat by the big man, pulled a typewriter in front of himself, then, because he was very lonely, and because his heart was swollen at the memory of the treatment he had received from his brothers of the press, he looked shyly to one side and said: "I don't know *what* to write this morning."

The effect was instantaneous and singular. The big man said "Huh!"—and hurled himself at his typewriter. The attack was like the spring of a cat, with the weight of a hippopotamus; the machine vanished within the whirling lines made by the flying arms, and there came from it a continuous whining whirr. Charles watched in stupor. Each explosion, as its energy began to wane, was succeeded by a new one, still more pressed, still more violent. Now and then there would be a sort of a half-lull, as when a prize-fighter is "sizing up" his opponent; then the machine vanished anew beneath a new cyclonic rush, and existed only in a long purr of blended staccatos.

This went on for a long time, while Charles could do nothing but look on in frantic amazement. Then the performance ceased as abruptly as it had begun; the man pulled his last page out, placed it on those which covered the table, took them all up, tapped them into a compact whole, and said: "What was that you were saying?"

"Oh, nothing," said Charles, who really had almost forgotten. "Nothing—only that I didn't know just what I'd write to-day."

His loneliness, and something receptive about the big man, drew him on. "I missed an interview yesterday," he explained. "At least, I didn't write it. I got the interview all right—but it was no good because the man wasn't a local man."

"Ah," said the big man, looking interested. "You're the correspondent who writes only California news?"

"Yes, sir. You see, our paper is a local paper and cares most about news of the local boys."

THE big man had now slipped into a reading of his copy. Now and then with a blue pencil he made some heavy emendation. But the last pages he read fast, without making any change, and when he had finished he was breathing hard. "There, my boy," he said to Charles, as he patted the pile, "is a great story. Don't let any one fool you about this—a great story. It's yesterday's fracas. Saw it all—from the top of a mountain—from the top of a tree—through my glasses. Lots of smoke. Little bits of men walking. Some fall like dolls. And over beyond——"

"They were big," said Charles, interrupting. "From where I was, they were big, big—they were like giants. They stood up so straight! And they carried bayonets and machine guns and tripods and picks and shovels, and the sun shone on all that and made it all lances—burning lances. And that curtain ahead, snapping and twisting, and that little village in the corner, just like stage scenery and fireworks—the last days of Pompeii, *you* know. But in the shell-hole——"

"What's that, what's that, what's all that stuff?" the big man almost cried. "You saw the fight? Yesterday's fight? You saw all that? You didn't go *over*, did you? You don't mean to say you went *over* with them?"

"I don't know. Not exactly. I followed 'em. I wanted to interview a fellow named Cute Cunningham. *They* had told me he was from California. But he wasn't," Charles ended dolorously.

"And you say the men looked tall?" the big man suggested slyly.

"Yes, sir. Like giants. And the sun shone on their bayonets and things. The barrage was just one great curtain from earth to sky, snapping and crackling, and the little village went all red, then all black, then all red, then all black——"

Charles was off again, now—and for good. Suddenly he felt as if he had gone up in a balloon—or rather was a little balloon himself—fixed high above what he had seen yesterday. He looked down and saw everything, as clear as through a glass. He saw himself, a little man, wandering through the enormous spectacle, and out of his mouth, in smooth-running flow, poured the words telling what he saw, while a great warmth went through his veins, and his cheeks burned.

WHEN he had finished—after several false stops followed by new flare-ups—there was a long silence. The big man got up and walked about the room; he went to a window and stood with his brow against the cold pane. He seemed to be trying to cool that brow. As a matter of fact, he was. He was sweating like a wrestler. As a matter of fact he *was* wrestling—wrestling temptation.

He got back to his chair, prepared to sit down, but instead turned and looked at the seat and said: "Get out of there, devil!" Three times he made as if to sit, and three times he said, looking at the seat of the chair, "Get out of there, devil!" Finally, either because he had been obeyed or because he had decided the squashing effect of his bulk would be sufficient, he sat down.

He sat down, drew a long black cigar from the regions about his heart, handed it with great seriousness to Charles, drew another, as seriously introduced it in the corner of his mouth, and said: "Tell you what: I'm going to take charge of you!"

Charles, in his dazed state, was a ready subject for any suggestion. "Yes, sir," he said alertly.

"Put a sheet of paper in your typewriter."

Charles did so.

"Now, write."

"What?" said Charles.

"What you have been telling me. Exactly what you have been telling me. Exactly as you told it to me. Just sit there and *look*. Don't think of writing; just look. Look hard at what you saw yesterday, and let your paws do the rest."

"Yes, sir," said Charles.

He wasted two pages on a labored introduction, which the big man promptly pushed down into a waste-basket, then got going. With glazed eyes looking straight over the paper, body cataleptic, he fixed the scene of yesterday while his fingers

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slapped it on the typewriter in words. After his first radical action as copy-reader, the big man contented himself with placing a new number on each page as he began reading it (to make up for the two he had annihilated) and with sealing the end of each page with a grunt. He went out several times during the three hours that passed, returning once with fresh cigars, and another time with sandwiches and a bottle of beer. Charles, eating with one hand while the other ticked on, remembered gratefully his rare good luck. He had saved the money for breakfast by getting up late, and now he was saving lunch money. It was almost enough to make him forget yesterday's failure!

"Now, I'll tell you what we'll do," said the big man, when the story was finished and held the censor's liberating stamp. "We're going to send that story to my magazine."

CHARLES thought a moment, then shook his head. "I can't do that, sir," he said. "You see, I'm on salary with my paper, so I owe that story to my paper!"

"Do you mean to say you're going to give that story to your paper?" the big man almost shouted.

"They've been paying me my salary right along, sir," Charles observed. "Paying me right along as though I was over there doing my work, instead of being over here."

"Well, all right then," said the big man abruptly. "We'll cable them the story."

"Cable," Charles's tone was one of alarm and scandal. "Why, we can't do that, sir! Why, that would cost *mints* of money. Several hundred dollars!"

"Oh, look here," said the big man, "you just let *me* see to this. I'll be your financial agent. Here, give me the copy." And calmly he walked off with Charles's story to the *Postes et Télégraphes*.

The following days were rather unhappy for Charles. His experience had left in him a physical weariness which took the form of spiritual discouragement. Besides, he was having no luck; he was not running into a single story of a Californian; he was writing nothing; he was beginning to fear that, as a war correspondent, he was a failure. Add to this the worry caused whenever he thought of the now inexplicable passiveness which had allowed the story to be sent by cable. How much did he owe Sam Bolt? A horrible sum, no doubt; it weighed on his stomach of nights, he had not the courage to ask how much it was. Bolt's detached manner did not help; the big man was running about in his high-powered car as though he had no care in the world, leaving all the worrying to Charles.

As climax to these spiritual discomforts, the correspondents were beginning to "josh" him again. They wanted him to go to a Salvation Army Hut, famous for its doughnuts, at Anseauville, near Brigade Headquarters. They were telling him there was a California girl there who wanted to see him. He ignored all their hints, though, with decision and dignity; he would not "bite" this time.

THE mood was beginning to wear away when, on a bright morning, he was invited to "hop" on a car just departing. He hopped. But the car was not going to the front; it turned, and went exactly the opposite direction, toward Army Headquarters, some thirty miles away, and all the other cars seemed to be going too. As usual, Charles held his peace, and the information came to him free after a while. "We're all going to a Croix-de-guerre function. Some of the boys of the Twenty-eighth are to be decorated by the Frogs for that last little affair. There'll be a big bug of a Frog general there. He's going to kiss them and everything—grand doings!"

The ceremony proved impressive. It took place in the square of the old stone town, in a bluishly humid atmosphere that melted together the faded azures of the *poilus* and the rusty golds of the doughboys that lined it; a detachment of

The general pinned the cross upon Charles's narrow chest, then seized him and kissed him on both cheeks. The brother correspondents of Charles Hamilton Potts were all clapping hands and clicking cameras.

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Alpine Chasseurs, with whirling trumpets, rendered the honors. In the center a forlorn score of doughboys stood in line, with the air of awaiting execution. The French general arrived on a rush in his automobile, went rapidly through the preliminary courtesies, and as rapidly set to work. His aide handed him a paper. Standing before the first doughboy in the line, he read what was on the paper. His aide then handed him a cross. He pinned the cross dexterously on the doughboy's chest, then, seizing the doughboy's head, kissed the much-warned but still astonished boy lightly on both cheeks. Thus he went on down the line in businesslike fashion. When he had passed the last man, his aide came to the group of correspondents, and said: "*Et où sè trouve le correspondent qui doit être décoré.*"

Charles Hamilton Potts, who understood not a word of French, found himself pushed forward by his brother scribes. They pushed him enthusiastically till they had him before the general, then suddenly left him as a bit of wreckage is left by the sea. The aide passed the general a paper. Standing before the stupefied Charles, the general read the paper. The aide passed the general a cross. The general pinned the cross upon Charles's narrow chest, then seized him and kissed him on both cheeks. The brother correspondents of Charles Hamilton Potts were all clapping hands and clicking cameras. "You're Kroy-de-guerred!" one of them obligingly shouted.

"Do you know what the big Muck-a-muck read?" said Parker, as the official party was leaving, and the soldiers' hedge wheeled and marched away to the Alpines' screaming bugles. "I've got it all down here, in good old United States. It says: 'Charles Hamilton Potts, American War Correspondent. Displayed the highest quality of courage by attacking with a regiment of his countrymen, although this was altogether outside of the line of his duty. Though himself wounded (the Gillette-razor scratch, Charles thought) helped carry back a wounded infantryman to the first-aid station, across the battle-field swept with machine-gun fire, under a heavy bombardment. Croix de guerre with palm.' "

"WHAT do you mean?" said Charles. "Do you mean to say all that was about me?"

"Your name is Charles Hamilton Potts, isn't it?"

"Well, yes!"

"It's all about you, then!"

Bolt, who had been watching with stolid interest, now came to him. "Here's a cable for you," the big man said. "Found it in the box back at Headquarters just when we were leaving, and thought I'd better bring it along. Hope it isn't bad news, old man."

To Charles, although war correspondent, cables were strange and rare; he opened this one with trembling fingers. Then, still much moved, but now not with fear, he passed it to Bolt. The cable was from Charles's chief, from the editor of the Bolinas *Herald*. "Congratulations on the great story," it said. "Following your suggestion, have syndicated it and hold five thousand dollars to your credit."

"Five thousand dollars! Say—*some* price, eh, for one story!"

"But," said Charles, "what's that about my suggesting he syndicate it? I never cabled anything like that. I wonder where he got it!"

"Oh," said Bolt negligently, "some mistake of the cable employees. They often put in stuff like that. The service is altogether bad."

"Say," began Parker, in sly reminiscence of past jests, "you ought to go to the Salvation Army Hut at Anseauville. There's a story for you there. There's a Californian for you there. A Californian that wants to see you. Wants to see you bad!"

"I'LL tell you what, boys," said Charles, now radiant inside and out. "I'll tell you what I'll do to celebrate. I'll bite. Yes, sir, I'll *bite!* I'll go to Anseauville this very afternoon and see if that Californian is from Chicago!"

He did that very thing. In the afternoon, after lunch, he departed for the front in a car all by himself (he had decided now to be Accredited and wear a Sam Browne belt). Anseauville, Brigade Headquarters, was a hamlet which received now and then the compliment of a few shells, so that all the roofs were punctured, most of the walls down, and the cellars were the favorite apartments. The Salvation Army Hut was across the way from Headquarters. It had been a large stone barn, but the roof was gone, together with the top of the walls, and this deficiency had been made good by means of a large tent. As Charles entered, a cornet, lone, drooping and plaintive, was squawking a hymn, supported by a hundred doughboys, uncertain of voice, who evidently were doing the best they knew without having their hearts altogether on the job, and rather with the air of awaiting with patience an event of more importance. This was not long in coming. The cornet died out as a hose which has lost its pressure; the voices, suddenly hearing themselves for the first time, stopped self-shamedly—and the entire assembly made a rush for a long counter upon which a great deep pan had just been pushed from behind the curtain separating the kitchen. The pan was full of doughnuts—of the doughnuts which had made this hut famous throughout the Army; a young freckle-faced lassie began to distribute them.

Rather to Charles's surprise, she nodded to him as her eye lit on him, and said pleasantly: "Go back into the kitchen, Mr. Potts; there's some one in there that wants to see you."

"Maybe there *is* some one from California after all," Charles thought.

"Or maybe it's a trick," he thought again, trying to be wise in proportion to his late experience.

In some excitement he went behind the counter, and then through the canvas flap into the kitchen beyond.

Inside, on a sturdy tripod, a great caldron was sizzling. At the caldron, a large ladle in hand, a robust but feminine figure stood, her broad back to Charles. She was clad in khaki, an overseas cap sat tilted upon her head, and on a chair well at hand were a steel helmet and a gas-mask.

Charles discreetly coughed.

The robust lady turned, gave him a look, said, "Have a doughnut, Charles;" and Charles saw that she was his wife, his capable wife, whom he had left in California.

It was a moment calling for effusion of feeling. But Charles, slim and wistful of soul, was incapable of demonstration, and she, capable of perfectly tempestuous expression, had always held herself carefully in leash for fear of scaring him to death. So, all Charles did was to munch the doughnut and say: "Well, how are you?" To which she answered: "Oh, fine—have another."

CHARLES, sitting on the edge of a kitchen table by the warmth of the sizzling stove, was quite happy. Thinking it over, he had five thousand dollars, the Croix de guerre, a doughnut, and a wife. He was glad he had come to the war.

This war-corresponding was a pipe, anyway. Already he had his next story practically set up in his mind; he'd write it in the morning. "Spent last night at the front, eating doughnuts with a Californian. Not only a Californian, but an inhabitant of Bolinas itself. And not only an inhabitant of Bolinas, but one of the fair sex. And who was the lady? Betcher a million you can't guess! Well, the lady is the own wife of ye humble scribe himself. She is here, in the Salvation Army, making doughnuts for the boys, there where the machine-gun pops and the old whizz-bang bangs. It was some pleasant evening your correspondent spent. War isn't always what Sherman said it was."

Color-Mood

By Helen Frazee-Bower

GREEN up the valley-road,
Green on the hills,
But down on the heart of me
A gray rain spills.

Gray down the mountainside,
Gray field and bush,
But up through the heart of me
Green buds push.

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The Subjunctive Mood

By Barker Shelton

THURSDAY afternoons the Misses Dinsmore take the air. Winter or summer, rain or shine, as regularly as the calendar marks up Thursday they celebrate this weekly rite, for the Misses Dinsmore are the sort of people who live and move and have their being by an imposing accumulation of just such iron-bound, unbreakable rites. It wouldn't quite be Thursday to them unless they took the air from half-past two until four in the afternoon.

Being of the old school, they imbibe their Thursday ozone from the frayed cushions of an old-school equipage. No clattering taxi nor noisy motor for them! Like themselves, their chariot is a relic of a past decade, braving the progress of an unfeeling world beyond its time. Aloysius McPherson perches on the box-seat of his cab or coupé, or whatever the rattling vehicle which causes passers-by to turn and stare after it is, and chirrups to Horace Greeley, rusty roan in color, sure of foot, plodding, but eminently sleek and well kept, between the shafts.

Aloysius has small blue eyes with a twinkle in them, a short neck and queerly hunched shoulders that give his head the appearance of a turtle's about to be drawn into its shell, and a plug hat of ancient and honorable vintage pulled down so far it seems to be supported by his overlarge ears. Aloysius may have been young once, but it is hard to believe it. He matches perfectly his surviving-beyond-its-time outfit and his two regular Thursday afternoon passengers who pose rigidly within the ark.

The windows are always lowered, winter or summer, rain or shine, as they jounce along of a Thursday afternoon, Aloysius chirruping in perfunctory fashion now and then to Horace Greeley, and Horace Greeley, knowing full well that such chirrupings are purely perfunctory, paying no attention to them whatever; up the Avenue, through the park to a certain bridge, to the left just beyond it; out always by the same gate, and down the Avenue again to the street where Mrs. Hammond conducts her most respectable lodging-house, the large front room on the second floor of which the Misses Dinsmore call home.

Never any deviation from this fixed route, lest that which has become a rite descend through such deviation into the ranks of the ordinary and the commonplace.

There was no mistaking Horace Greeley's hoof-beats in this era of gasoline. Also the ungentle rattle and clank of Mr. McPherson's equipage was peculiarly its own. These sounds, accentuated by the calm of a certain quiet street, indentified themselves beyond peradventure. Moreover, it was Thursday—a chilly late autumn Thursday—and four o'clock.

Lois Kinsley glanced out one of her windows. Her windows were the two in the front room on the third floor of the lodging-house, the eminent respectability of which was carefully guaranteed, maintained and guarded by one Mrs. Hammond.

Lois Kinsley laid aside the dress on which she was working. It was a wedding-dress of white satin, quite plain, yet with an air of its own. Such a dress as would cost you a tidy little sum indeed, if you didn't happen to know of Lois Kinsley in her third-floor-front room at Mrs. Hammond's and her ability to cut and make a gown, particularly wedding-gowns, after well-known and expensive models at approximately a quarter of the cost of these latter purse-emptying affairs.

A spirit kettle hummed and bubbled and sent out a most comforting cloud of steam on Lois's table. Beside it were cups, a teapot with a green dragon cavorting all over it and lending its tail for the spout, a small jar of cream for Miss Hannah's tea and thin slices of lemon for Miss Florence's; little sweet-filled biscuits for Miss Florence, and some of the harder, plainer ones Miss Hannah preferred.

THROUGH that window Lois saw Aloysius McPherson climb down stiffly from his box-seat, open the sagging door and help Miss Hannah out; and Miss Hannah turn to help Aloysius help Miss Florence, who was a trifle lame but wouldn't admit it, to alight.

Lois reached the front door just as the Misses Dinsmore—Aloysius fluttering importantly at the left side of Miss Florence, who would not suffer him to help her farther—reached the top step.

"Boo! Isn't it chilly?" said Lois. "Tea is all ready for us in my room."

"Oh, my dear child——" Miss Hannah deprecated.

"When you're so busy!" put in Miss Florence.

"So much trouble on our account!" Miss Hannah caroled her usual antiphony at the usual place.

"We really shouldn't let her do it, Hannah."

"Indeed we shouldn't."

Lois gently shooed them up the stairs. She turned to Aloysius, who was closing the door. He looked smaller, older and more chilled than usual.

"Wait just a minute!" Lois said to him, and sped past Miss Hannah, trying to help Miss Florence up the stairs, and Miss Florence resenting such proffered assistance.

She was back in a shake of an eye with a little lacquer tray. Aloysius beamed at her. His turtle head concluded to come farther out of its shell. He said he liked tea and took cream in it. Sweet biscuit and plain evidently looked equally good to him. He passed his cup back to Lois and smacked his lips there in Mrs. Hammond's hall—as dark and gloomy as it was respectable—which touts loudly its respectability.

"It hit the spot, marm," said Aloysius politely. "The thoughtfulness of it as much as the tea," he added.

Lois smiled, flushing a bit at the sincerity of his words, which he emphasized with bobs of his head.

"Them as is good to the old has my money on 'em always," said Aloysius. "There ain't any too many these days as is good to the old. I've watched you with the two old dames, marm."

Aloysius always discounted his own years. He looked older even than Miss Florence.

"The man you marry will be a lucky lad," Aloysius rattled on. "Tie to the girl that's thoughtful of old folks is what I'd tell any young squirt that was beginnin' to take serious notice of the ladies. There's a test that won't fail: how good she is to old folks. Thank you kindly for the tea and the little cakes, marm. They sure did hit the spot."

Aloysius shambled down the steps and climbed to the bridge of his craft. With much slapping of the reins he got Horace Greeley into the lurching motion which was Horace Greeley's idea of a trot.

Lois went up to her room and her protesting guests. Miss Hannah was touching the half-finished dress of white satin on the chair where Lois had tossed it.

"I was just saying to Hannah it ought to be your own wedding-dress," said Miss Florence.

"I was agreeing with her, too," said Miss Hannah.

"The bridegroom would be a lucky man," said Miss Florence.

"Any girl who is thoughtful and considerate of older people is a girl to trust," said Miss Hannah.

"We were thinking of your thoughtfulness in taking that tea down to old Aloysius just now," said Miss Florence.

Plainly Aloysius McPherson had nothing on the Misses Dinsmore when it came to discounting years.

Lois laughed a little and flushed a little and steered the conversation adroitly toward the usual episodes of General Edward Dinsmore, who seemed to be the Dinsmore family's best bet.

A HALF-HOUR later Lois escorted the two old ladies down-stairs. She always escorted them down-stairs after their little visits to her own room. She did this because Miss Hannah invariably had trouble getting the door unlocked and Miss Florence, who would never have let any lock in the world balk her efforts, could not stoop to the keyhole. Lois unlocked the door for them, said good night, and went back to her work.

The afternoon light was waning. She lighted the gas and picked up the dress. She made a face at it as it lay there in her

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lap. So many, many wedding-dresses she had made! And she never liked making them, either. Street gowns she didn't mind particularly, nor house dresses nor the like. But wedding-gowns were different, and too many of them seemed to fall to her lot.

She was always in an unhappy frame of mind when she made one of those wedding-gowns for somebody else. They brought her an unpleasant mood. Lois called it her subjunctive mood, because it was superabundant in "ifs" and "mays" and "mights" and "woulds" and "shoulds."

She put some fine stitches in a seam, paused to look out the window for a time, then brought herself back to her work. If she had had a little time to run about and enjoy herself like other girls now and then; if she hadn't been forced to start penny-chasing so fearfully young; if Fate hadn't thrust her into a family where there were so many younger children; if her father hadn't died when those children were so little and her mother hadn't shuffled off the mortal coil so soon afterward——

The subjunctive mood was going its full blast and having its will of her, which was something that would never do. Might-have-beens never got you anything.

She had done well by that fatherless-motherless brood. They were scattered to the four winds of heaven now, all of them doing splendidly, thank you! They sent her money now and again when they thought of it, and came to see her whenever they could spare the time out of their own busy lives to do so. They all hoped she would marry and find more comfort in life than a three-flights-front room such as this of hers at Mrs. Hammond's eminently respectable lodging-house could offer.

Lois made another grimace at the dress in her lap. She lifted her head to survey herself in the mirror of her bureau, just across the room. The face that looked back at her out of the glass was one of the sort termed "sensible." To call a face sensible had always seemed to Lois to be offering apologies for it. She wished her face weren't sensible, she wished the lines weren't thickening so in it; she wished she were going to leave this room forever for—well, say a new house such as the young lady for whom she was making this very dress was to have, when she came back from her wedding-trip.

LOIS sighed and shook her head. This little old room of hers! The eternal wedding-gowns she made so well! Such was the lot of possessors of "sensible" faces that were showing too many and too deep lines, all the chatter of the Misses Dinsmore and old Aloysius McPherson notwithstanding. Wherefore she would be content with such a lot, or at least resigned to it, and attend to business and quit mooning, and get this dress ready for delivery on scheduled time, which was next Wednesday at noon.

She was behind with it as it was, and this pausing to make tea for the Misses Dinsmore after their Thursday ride, and listening to their chatter and loafing along afterward wasn't helping her catch up. That dress must be ready Wednesday noon for the last trying-on, and the ensuing fault-finding or enthusing over it, as the case might be. Precedent had taught Lois it was a toss-up which it would be.

She attacked that wedding-gown with frowning determination. So many of them she had made! Always for other people!

The gown was finished Tuesday evening. Gas had burned late each night in that three-flights-front room to this end. But it was done. Ahead of time. With all tomorrow morning to rest up. Lois Kinsley surveyed her handiwork and found it good. There was a dress exactly like it in a downtown establishment—an imported affair that would set you back seven hundred and fifty dollars. No whit better than this gown Lois was inspecting at the moment, either. No more air of artful simplicity to it.

LOIS held it up, against herself, there before the mirror. Involuntarily she fluffed out her hair. Her face did not look so horribly sensible with her hair fluffed out. That wedding-gown would fit her admirably. The lady for whom it was being made was Lois's own size and build. Only her face would never by any means be termed sensible. It was a wholly sensible little face, but its other qualities were more striking. It had no lines in it, deep or otherwise. There was no need of apologetic euphemisms when speaking of it.

Lois had never before been seized with a desire to try on any gown she had made. Perhaps this was because she had never made one that she knew beforehand would fit her so perfectly. Perhaps on the other hand this had nothing whatever to do with it. Perhaps the subjunctive mood possessed her more fully than it ever had before. Anyway, Lois Kinsley made her hair more fluffy, and wriggled out of her dress and into the wedding-gown, and snapped a few dozen hooks and eyes and gave a few dozen little pats and tugs and pulls and smoothings, and looked at herself in the glass, and decided to try on the veil too. And got it out of the closet and crowned her fluffed-out hair with it.

She looked at herself again in the mirror. She smiled. Ten years dropped from her. Then she flushed beautifully, and five more went by the board.

Suppose she were about to leave this room forever—for such a house as the lady for whom this dress had been made would occupy! A real home; some one else to worry about the bread-winning! The pleasant glow such a conjecture brought with it startled Lois. Suppose, for instance, it was to be at St. John's at the corner of the Avenue—that she was turning down the gas for the last time!

In a corner of her closet, on a hanger hidden by its cambric cover, was an opera-wrap she was making for a customer. Its finishing would claim her attention now the wedding-gown was off her mind. It was in the last stages of construction, where a few stitches and the pulling of the bastings would complete it.

Lois took it down. There under the gas-jet, in the wedding-gown and the veil, she caught up a needle. Her flying fingers took those few last stitches; pulled out the bastings. She threw it over her shoulders. Some of us never get over moments of childish pretense that we are something different from what we really are; that life is better to us than it really is; that things are coming more to our liking than they ever will. Such of us are the lucky ones who make little golden moments in life for ourselves, however otherwise Fate and our status in society and our salaries have conspired against us.

Lois Kinsley suddenly decided to pretend thus childishly, and enjoy the little golden moment it brought her. To slip out of the eminently respectable lodging-house of Mrs. Hammond and down the street as far as St. John's at the corner of the Avenue and back again, and take off the dress, and meekly accept the lot of people such as she, whom other people mention as having nice, sensible faces.

She went noiselessly down the stairs. Very softly she opened the front door. An antideluvian cab was drawn up to the curb. A rusty roan horse sagged between the shafts. A little old man with quaintly hunched shoulders and a plug hat, the brim of which rested on his outstanding ears, was climbing up to the box.

It being the first of the month, as Lois now remembered at the sight of that sorry equipage, Aloysius McPherson had just assisted at the sacred rite wherein the first of each month the Misses Dinsmore settled with him for the Thursday afternoon airings of the previous month.

He espied Lois on the steps. He did not recognize her at first in her festival raiment. But he did recognize the chance of a fare.

"Carriage, marm?" he invited, holding up one forefinger.

Lois descended the steps. A sudden impulse took her across the curb to Aloysius McPherson's cab or coupé, or whatever you chose to call it.

"Oh, so it's you, marm!" he said, as he got a good look at her.

Lois stepped through the door he held open for her.

"Where to?" he inquired.

"Drive me," said Lois Kinsley, her eyes shining under the veil, "to the man I am to marry."

"Sure, marm! The address?"

"I haven't the least idea."

"The gentleman's name, then?"

"I haven't the least idea of that, either."

ALOYSIUS McPHERSON lifted the plug hat from his ears. He scratched his head, as who wouldn't under the circumstances? Then he saw Lois was laughing quietly. An answering gleam came into his own eyes.

"'Tis a pretty dress you're wearin', marm. The two old dames tell me you make dresses for your livin'. Did you make that one?"

"I did. For somebody else. And tried it on. And it fitted me beautifully. And I was just pretending. Did you ever pretend?"

"Often. All kinds of things."

"So I'll get out again, since we don't know where to go."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," said Aloysius, his eyes shining at the carriage door, which he had closed nearly shut. "We'll have a bit of a ride while you go on pretending in that pretty dress you made for somebody else. For the tea and the little cakes you've passed out to me odd afternoons when I've brought the old dames back from their Thursday drive."

The door clicked fully shut. The vehicle let a groan out of its every ancient joint as Aloysius climbed to the conning-tower.

"Clk! Clk! Giddap, Horace!" he telegraphed the engine-room, with sundry accompanying yanks at the reins.

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"My father has been steering young women my way the past three years. When he begins to snatch them from the very altar itself——"

They lurched into clattering motion.

Lois leaned forward on those dusty old cushions. Her first thought was to tap on the glass and tell Aloysius she'd better get out. Then, with a little chuckle all to herself, she settled back. She had liked that understanding twinkle in the old man's eyes when he closed the carriage door. Besides, if one started a game, why turn back at the very outset? The ceremony wasn't to be at St. John's after all. She allowed her pretense the luxury of a canopy over the steps down to the sidewalk and a strip of red-velvet carpet under the canopy. While she was doing things it was just as well to do them properly.

They turned into the Avenue, and Horace was steered into a northerly course by the pilot in the conning-tower. In truly John Gilpinesque fashion they rattled past the church Lois had picked out as her second choice. So she chose one yet farther up-town. A splash of autumn rain pattered against the windows. She expected Aloysius to turn back at that. Evidently Horace shared this belief, for he slowed down.

"Giddap, you!" Aloysius urged him northward.

They reached those distant places where subways end and open lots pop up with greater frequency. They crossed a bridge. It began raining in businesslike fashion. A seeping stream of water struck coldly on the girl's face. She moved to the right-hand corner. Another filter of rain dripped upon her. She tried the opposite seat, first the right-hand corner, then the left-hand corner. Same result. Aloysius McPherson's cab was not weather-proof at any angle. Lois became genuinely alarmed. If she ruined the opera-wrap and, worse yet, the wedding-gown beneath it, she saw a fearful hole in her hard-won savings, to say nothing of the impossibility of getting another dress ready by to-morrow noon. She reached forward to tap on the glass and hail Aloysius into the solution of her predicament.

But before she could thus send out her distress signal, the carriage came to an abrupt stop. Aloysius bent over, examining one forward wheel. His inspection was as brief as it was unsatisfactory. He whisked open the carriage door.

"I've got you into a fine pickle, marm, now, ain't I?" he bleated.

"No! it's my own fault," said Lois, fair-minded even in her anxiety.

"Well, anyway, whichever of us is responsible, we've gone and lost a nut off the nigh for'ard wheel."

"It's getting pretty moist in here," said Lois.

Aloysius thrust in a hand, palm upward. A young rivulet fell into it.

"She's needed shinglin' this long time," said he.

"The dress!" Lois muttered anxiously.

"Sure, marm. We mustn't go and spoil that purty dress."

"I wouldn't mind so much if it were my own. But it isn't. And you see it was to be ready at noon to-morrow for the lady who is having it made. And if it's ruined through my foolishness——"

"Mine!" Aloysius insisted.

The rain turned itself into a young deluge.

"We'll have to do something in a mighty big hurry," said Lois.

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"You won't mind a rough shelter, marm?"

"Any at all that's tight."

"Sit close, then. I'll pull over across the street, easylike, and ask shelter for you in yonder shack."

They had stopped opposite a little rough shack, lights within streaming out of the open door. A rough little shanty, covered snugly with red roofing-paper, at one end of an open ditch. Above the ditch was a trestle-like affair, along which buckets swung and clanked on an endless chain. Arc-lights of great power shone whitely through the rain all along the ditch. Farther along its muddy length a donkey-engine wheezed and coughed. This much Lois saw through the dripping windows as Aloysius swung his craft to port and this makeshift haven in a storm.

They drew up close to the door of the little shanty, the nigh for'ard wheel still on the axle. Aloysius pulled open the cab door. Lois dove headlong into the shack. There was a desk in one corner, a stove aglow in another. Blue-prints were tacked to the walls. The smell of stale pipe-smoke was heavy in the place. It was deserted for the moment.

"Sit down, marm," Aloysius invited, playing the host and drawing a chair toward the stove. "Now then, I'll go out and find you a taxi to take you back. One that don't leak," he added.

"Why not telephone for it?" Lois suggested, pointing to the instrument on the deserted desk.

"I'd like to get Horace under cover while I'm havin' a nut put back on the wheel. It's a nasty night for man or beast. So I'll toddle along to a place I know up the street a piece, and I'll send the taxi for you. You're in no great hurry, marm?"

"None at all," said she.

Aloysius turned up his coat collar and pulled the plug hat lower on his head. He ducked out into the rain much as if he were about to take a swim he didn't care to take in the least. He led the horse by the bridle, pausing every now and then to look at the troublesome forward wheel It is worthy of note that once he was well away from the shack and the chance of the girl's spying upon him through its one window he mounted the box and urged Horace Greeley into his best imitation of a gallop. A few minutes later he made port in a small stable that catered to such relics of the past as Aloysius McPherson's outfit. He unhitched Horace and put him in a stall. Then he went into the office and talked pleasantly with the night boss of the place. Taxicabs or any pressing need of them did not enter into the conversation.

Lois listened to the roar of rain on the shack's red roofing-paper, and the squeak and squeal of that endless chain and its big steel buckets, and the panting of the donkey-engine, now growing louder, now dying out. Taxis went dodging up and down through the rain past the shack. None of them stopped.

Suppose she were about to leave this room forever!

Fifteen minutes of this, and a man came into the shack. He was a tall young man, very straight and rather imposing, even in his wet and muddy clothes. He came into the shack as if he were used to coming there whenever he pleased, and also as if he expected to find it empty when he did come to it. The sight of the girl in wedding finery there by the stove seemed to upset him. The assurance that this was his shack, to come to and depart from as he saw fit, left him with startling suddenness. He was smoking a large briar pipe. He took it hastily from his mouth. He wore a wet and bedraggled hat of gray felt with little plasters of white clay sticking coyly to it. He promptly took it off.

Lois had risen as he came in, and was quite unaware that she had risen.

"Oh—ah—how do you do?" he said.

He looked like a man who was wholly master of himself usually. But he was far from master of himself at that moment. Wedding toggery is generally upsetting to the male of the species, anyway.

"How do you do?" Lois returned.

There was an embarrassed silence between them, broken only by the rain and the buckets on the chain and the donkey-engine.

"I hope I don't intrude," said Lois a trifle desperately at last.

"Oh, no! Indeed, no! Not at all. Not in the least!" he assured her.

"Suppose we sit down," she suggested demurely.

It seemed funny to invite a man to sit down in his own shack, but it was plain to her he had no intention of seating himself until she suggested it.

He turned to slide the tilting chair that stood before the desk across the floor to the stove. "Please take this one," he said. "I'm afraid that other one isn't very clean." His eyes were on the white satin dress as he spoke. It brought to Lois's mind the fact that her raiment needed explanation. She took the proffered chair.

"My cab—an old one with a horse, you know—broke down in front of here. A nut came off the near front wheel, I believe. It was leaking fearfully——"

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"The nut?" he asked soberly.

"No, the cab itself. And I was getting wet, and would have ruined my clothes. So the driver suggested I wait here until he sent a taxi for me. He's gone on to put up his horse somewhere while he gets his wheel fixed."

"Sensible driver," said he with a nod of his head, as if he wholly approved of that driver's course in so far as it brought the little lady in the white satin dress to this shack.

"But the taxi hasn't come yet!"

"How long have you been waiting?"

"About fifteen minutes."

"Well, that isn't very long to wait for a taxi. They're never about when you want them. Are you late?"

HE WAS taking in the wedding-clothes again as he spoke.

"Oh, no. There's lots of time."

"How much?"

"Oh, lots and lots," said she flushing, and angry because she did flush, and so flushing all the more.

"Then there isn't any need of my phoning for another taxi for you?"

"If you don't mind my waiting here for the one the driver is to send——"

"Indeed I don't," said he. "I'm mighty glad of company, even briefly, like this. It gets mighty poky here nights seeing to it that the foreman keeps the wops going right. Let me put some more coal on the fire."

"I'm quite warm, thank you."

"Are you wet?"

"No. Only the least bit, anyway."

"Did it hurt the dress?"

"No. I think not."

"I'm glad of that. It's a mighty pretty dress."

Lois's eyes acknowledged the compliment to her handiwork. No one at that moment would have termed Lois's face merely "sensible"; least of all the young man in the mud-spattered clothes at the other side of the stove.

"I wonder if you'll let me see you to the church when your taxi comes," he said, his eyes fixed upon her more intently than he imagined.

"The church!" Lois piped weakly.

"It's to be in church, isn't it? Something about those clothes says it's to be a church affair."

Lois did not say it was not to be a church affair. So the young man took it that silence gave assent.

"I'd rustle up some clothes that are more respectable than these."

He nodded toward a locker near the desk as he spoke. Lois looked genuinely alarmed.

"I'd just sit quietly in one of the back pews," he pleaded.

"I'm afraid you mustn't," she said.

"All right. Only, you see, I feel somewhat responsible for you in some vague sort of way—a little lady in her wedding-dress sitting in my old shack here, waiting for the taxi to come and take her to the church. Sort of like a godfather or something like that. I'd like to see the thing through. The wops would go it alone very well for a couple of hours or so. But, of course, if I mustn't——"

"I'd like to have you do it. Really, I would! But I'd rather you didn't go with me——"

"I'll walk it gladly, if you'll tell me which church it is?"

"I'd rather you wouldn't come at all. You see——"

What it was that he was to see she did not make clear to him; instead, she paused, very red and at loss for further words.

"I wish the taxi would come," she said at last.

He glanced at his watch and started. "You must be long overdue unless this is a very late wedding," he told her. "Don't you want me to phone for a taxi for you now?"

"I wasn't worrying about being late. I was worrying because the driver of that cab that brought me here is an old man. He went away alone, with a nut off one of the wheels. Something may have happened to him. He was going to send the taxi right away, and it doesn't come."

"If you knew where he was going to get that taxi I might try to trace him for you."

"I merely know he said he was going to put up his horse at some place near here while he got his wheel fixed. Something must have happened to him. I've been here over half an hour."

"Do you happen to know his name or his license number?"

"I DON'T know his number. His name is Aloysius McPherson."

A great change came over the young man. He looked as if he were trying hard to suppress an overpowering desire to laugh. He set his teeth in his under lip.

"Do you happen to be good to old people?" he asked with an unexpectedness that fairly dazed the girl.

"What has that got to do with it?"

"Everything in the world. Are you that sort of person?"

"I've been told I am."

"Don't worry any more about Aloysius McPherson. I'll bet my last cent he's quite safe."

She stared at him.

"I don't believe there's a nut off his wheel at all."

She stared harder.

"Aloysius McPherson happens to be my father."

She said something. She didn't know what it was. Neither did the young man. He was beginning to frown. He looked very masterful when he frowned.

"The uppermost desire in his queer old mind seems for me to marry—some one who is good to old people. Draw your own conclusions. It would have to be that sort of a person at that. He pinched and saved to give me my education. I'm not forgetting it. He'll have his home with me some day, and the lady I marry will be some one who will be good to him. Only the right lady hasn't appeared on the horizon as yet. But that isn't because he hasn't tried his best. He's been steering young women my way the past three years by one ruse or another. Only heretofore he has steered only highly eligible young women. When he begins to snatch them from the very altar itself——"

There was a shuffling in the vicinity of the shack's one window. Aloysius McPherson, too wet to have spent the whole of the last half-hour in the cozy stable office with the night boss, entered the shack.

"I've snatched nobody from the altar, young man," said Aloysius severely. "True, she wears a wedding-dress. But is it her own? Ask her that!"

A GREAT relief seemed to descend upon the younger man.

"Is it?" he said to the girl.

"It is not," said she.

"Isn't it a purty dress, boy? She made it herself. She makes 'em for her livin', in the same house where the two old dames live that I take for their ride every Thursday afternoon. It's somebody else's wedding-dress she's made; but she tried it on because it's that purty and that near her own fit, and starts out to take it for a little walk, pretendin' it's her own, like girls does sometimes, God bless 'em, for bein' able to pretend like that! And I'm there at the door of the house when she comes out, havin' just collected the bill for the two old dames' drives last month. And, 'Carriage, marm?' says I, and, 'Sure!' says she, steppin' in. And, 'Where to?' says I. 'Drive me to the man I'm going to marry,' says she. Have I done that? I hope to God I have!"

Lois, her face aflame, was edging out the shack door, regardless of the downpour. The younger man caught her arm.

"So do I," he said in a voice not wholly steady. "Has he?"

She suffered herself to be drawn gently back into the shack out of the rain.

"Time will tell," she said softly.

Aloysius McPherson, craning forward to catch her words, looked altogether too comfortably happy for a man as thoroughly drenched as he was at that moment.

IN THE SEPTEMBER EVERYBODY'S

Short Stories by

Clarence Budington Kelland

Frederick Orin Bartlett **Arthur Crabb** **Ellis Parker Butler**

Don Marquis **Lewis R. Freeman** **Garet Garrett**

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The Colyumists' Confessional

VIII. H. I. Phillips, *by Himself*

SOME are born colyumists, some achieve colyums and some have colyums thrust upon them. And some—we think the great majority—just "get that way."

For years, no doubt, the reading public has been keenly curious as to how they got that way; why they get that way; whether they deserve to get that way, and what, if anything, ought to be done about it. EVERYBODY'S, shirking full responsibility for the first time in its consideration of any problem, has evidently decided to let the colyumists state their case and leave the verdict to the jury. The jury's verdict may be brought in later, but perhaps no family magazine will print it.

It was my conviction, when first afflicted with colyumitis in the days when established colyum conductors kept our contributions and our stamps, that the interest of all concerned might be best served if whatever publicity the colyumist species secured could be given in the following manner, under a full-face and profile photograph:

$500 REWARD

Description—Average height, average weight, less than average ability; fair of complexion but unfair of methods; writes with a pronounced limp; has sullen disposition, hardened heart and an editorial-room expression about the eyes; wears tortoise-shell glasses, spats, runover heels and a Never-Slip fountain-pen fastener.

Smokes anything (although he used some discrimination before the cigar and tobacco prices went up); is very nervous when approached with the query: "Did you write that one about the chorus-girl shortage?" or "H w about those stamps I sent in for return postage?" Has a passion for solid food and unreasonably strong pipes. This man may be found frequenting far corners of the room where he retires and laughs at his own stuff. Is wanted for confiscation of $1,250,000 worth of bright ideas and an equal amount of two-cent stamps. Notify Sheriff's office if apprehended.

EVERYBODY'S, however, sees fit to give the colyumists more of a square deal. The choice of a title, "The Confessional," is appropriate even though forgiveness is not guaranteed.

How did I happen to become a colyumist? Would that I might, in accordance with precedent in such matters, state that I had been doing excellent work for the San Francisco *Examiner*, the Chicago *Tribune*, the Boston *Globe*, the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, and a string of other papers; that eagle-eyed New York publishers, attracted by my work, began bidding for my services and that I accepted the highest bid, which had but two less ciphers than the German indemnity. As a matter of fact I enjoyed no such distinction and became a colyumist by the gentle art of "boring from within."

I had no such boyhood ambition. The craving during what seemed the first hundred years of my life was to own the New York *Times*. Gaining my newspaper training in the city of New Haven, Connecticut, I was always within seventy-five miles of Times Square and felt that that represented a certain advantage. In a financial way it did—up to the time the government took over the New Haven road. My ambition to own the *Times* was strengthened by an early elevation to the lofty post of managing editor of the New Haven *Register*. Not until years later did I realize that my promotion to that height was due largely to a wave of intemperance which swept over the college city, engulfing all the other available candidates for the job.

Mr. Phillips has two column headings—one for The New York Globe, one for The Philadelphia Inquirer

THE GLOBE TROTTER

By H. I. PHILLIPS

THE ONCE OVER

By H. I. PHILLIPS

My first suspicion that there was any money in whatever sense of humor I might possess came when I asked the publisher of that paper for a raise in salary. "Phillips," he said, "that's the funniest suggestion I've heard in a long time." As he declined a suggestion that I keep up this line of entertainment at space rates, I eventually turned elsewhere.

In those dark days I turned to colyuming. It is strange how this craving develops.

A normal newspaperman with a serious outlook on life and commendable ambitions takes his first false step—he tries his first paragraph or jingle. Before he knows it, he is trying two or three a day. Then he is trying them before breakfast and spending his nights that way. He becomes a confirmed addict. His case is quite hopeless; he is a pathetic figure.

There is but one sobering influence. This lies in moving to a large city where one may become a colyum conductor and let contributors do all the work. In coming to a newspaper in a metropolitan city it is best to conceal the fact (or the pretense) that one is a colyumist or that one thinks one is. All editors are suspicious of colyumists-to-be. It is best to "bore from within," I think, before you bore from without. Of course, colyumists bore successfully either way, as any reader will admit.

In my case, I came to the New York *Globe* as a copy-reader. By appearing cheerful, good-natured and cordial, I completely concealed every symptom shown by the professional humorist. Once satisfied that the editors trusted me, I proceeded to bore. This was accomplished by submitting items or written comment of a flippant nature now and then on topics of the day. Under some encouragement, it became a matter of daily contributions "on the side." The city editor then began to regard me with suspicion. I realized that a bold stroke was needed.

Business of preparing a colyum, tenderly slipping it on to managing editor's desk before I concluded my day's work, and depositing with it a little note to the effect that "If you ever have any occasion to use matter of this nature, I'd like to take a shot at it." There was a reason for not presenting the idea in person.

Watching anybody read your stuff even after you are established is unnerving; watching an editor read it when you are aspiring to a job is simply awful!

The next day the colyum appeared in the paper. I do not know whether some advertiser failed to send in his ad and there was a certain space to be filled, or whether the m. e. sent it out by mistake. The colyum has been running ever since in the *Globe* and a number of other papers. I think that by this time the managing editor must have discovered it, but I never question him for fear it might be a mistake on his part, after all.

You ask what each colyumist considers his best stunt. I must confess total inability to answer. It is my interesting though rather annoying personal experience that very often the things I count on for the big appeal go over with the emphasis of the "dud," while something I consider passable causes a painful but encouraging amount of slapping on the back. I have one very set opinion: that a colyum should be up to the minute in newsiness and fashioned largely on affairs of the day.

I don't know that she is willing to share the responsibility which this confession will place upon her, but I try out most of my stuff on Mrs. Phillips, who is most considerate and who bears up well under

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it. A wife is essential to any colyumist, I think—preferably his own.

Here are several of Mr. Phillips's "Best Stunts," in our opinion—since we can't have his.

PHILIPPICS

If you think you are overworked, give a thought to the man who has the job saddling horses for William S. Hart.

The deportees on the Soviet arks were greatly satisfied with the ships; the propellers made 600 revolutions a minute.

Suggestions for campaign slogans in the 1920 campaign:

He kept us out of drink.

Watchful thirsting.

Too proud to brew.

Why talk about a candidate who will sweep the country? What America wants is a president who will clothe and feed it.

OMAR, THE RENT MAKER

Here with a little flat and modest chow,
A kitchenet, some closet room, and thou
Beside me in Manhattan wilderness—
Oh, wilderness were paradise enow!

Ah, my beloved, fill the cup that clears
To-day of past regrets and future fears;
To-morrow? Why, to-morrow I will sign
A lease at any price—and no arrears!

Ah, make the most of all we have to spend
Before the rent doth further up ascend:
Apartmenteering gets one's goat, I know—
But some day profiteers may meet their end.

Alike for those who for to-day prepare
And those that after some to-morrow stare,
A landlord from a tower of darkness cries:
"Fools! Lower rents are neither here nor there."

Into Manhattan came I, why, not knowing,
Nor whence, like water, willy-nilly flowing;
From house to house as wind along the waste,
I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing.

What, without asking, hither hurried whence!
And, without asking whither, hurried hence!
Ah, contrite Heav'n endowed us with the vine
To drown the memory of that race for rents!

Oh, threats of hell and hopes of paradise!
One thing at least is certain—who denies?
One thing is certain, all the rest is lies—
The limit with the landlord is the skies.

If I but had a tent wherein to rest,
Or poultry coop unpainted and unblessed,
I'd move me in, but presently I know
Be ousted by some profiteering pest.

We are no other than a moving row
Of visionary shapes that come and go
(But mostly go) in caravan and truck,
Chased by these landlords, Abie, Ben, and Joe.

Impotent pieces of the game each plays
Upon his checker-board of boost and raise;
Hither and thither move we nights and days,
Wond'ring how any salaried man the rental pays.

The moving finger writes; and having writ
Another lease, moves on; piety or wit
Can't lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

Ah, love, could you and I with fate conspire
To grasp a city block or two entire,
Would we not shatter rents to bits?—Or would
We, after all, decide to send them up a little higher?

LEAP-YEAR RULES

THE matrimonial game laws are now off. The open season for hunting husbands opened at 12.01 *Jan.* 1, *and will continue until that hour Dec.* 31 *next. Husbands may be taken between the hours of sunrise and sunrise any day within that period. For the preservation of the male species against husband-hoarders, however, a set of game laws has been provided as follows:*

1. Hunting husbands from airplanes, power boats, and flatcars is prohibited in the night season.
2. The use of decoys is unconstitutional.
3. No hunter shall bag more than one full-grown specimen per hunt. Six catches per season is considered the limit by the Game Preservation Society and the high courts.
4. Hunting from behind a "screen" or ambush of any sort is prohibited.
5. The use of "decoy calls" to lure the quarry from its lair is barred. Only the regulation call shall be resorted to, namely: a soft and plaintive crooning of the time-honored "Ooogy—Ooogy—Ooo-o-o-o" for young husbands and the familiar "Does—Ookums—luv-v-v—Snoo-ookums?" for adults.
6. The rapid raising and lowering of the eyebrows by a huntress is prohibited, as is the dipping of eyelashes in any glistening liquid with intent to blind and dazzle a victim.
7. The use of the hypnotic stare is prohibited.
8. The use of powders (other than cosmetic) to smoke out a specimen who has taken refuge in his lair is barred; and the practise of "treeing" a husband is illegal.
9. The use of bloodhounds or ferrets, except in states where the quarry is particularly ferocious, is forbidden.
10. Taking of game in traps, such as front parlors and darkened sitting-rooms, is prohibited.
11. The "tracking" of a quarry through footprints in the snow shall be considered as an unfair advantage.
12. Disfiguring game should be avoided as far as possible, and the use of buckshot or shrapnel is to be discouraged.
13. Enticing a domestic specimen from its habitat by the use of low-neck gowns or short skirts is illegal.
14. No huntress shall adopt the French custom of wearing jewels on her ankle while hunting.
15. No game under seventeen years of age shall be taken, and if caught in a net unintentionally shall be thrown back.

THE REAL HOME-RUN KING

"ONE Hundred Thousand Paid for Ruth,
The Home-Run King," I read,
Which makes me realize, forsooth,
How cheap am I indeed.

For I'm a Home-Run King myself—
To run my home's my job;
Yet no one takes me off the shelf
To shine above the mob.

I have to hit in every pinch—
To keep my home run right;
And at the bat I must not flinch—
The ball I HAVE to smite.

The grocer throws me artful curves
My tailor twirls with skill,
The butcher never, never swerves—
I HAVE to swat the pill!

The doctor covers deepest right
Or somewhere thereabout;
The landlord covers left field tight
And tries to THROW me OUT!

The baker lays for me at first,
The milkman plays at second;
At third's the iceman (quite the worst)—
At home-plate wifey beckons.

I know well what a home run means—
I make one every time;
Yet Ruth gets many thousand beans
While I can't raise a dime!

PADEREWSKI AND PHILOSOPHY

(*"Paderewski's government in Poland is going to pieces. He may soon return to America as a pianist."*—News Item.)

Tired am I of all discord and strife—
There's no happiness ruling a land;
Soon I'll be sighing, "Boy, this is the life!"
As I govern a sweet baby-grand.

Hard was my life as a governing Pole,
For I had to preside without fees;
Just now, I'll grant you, a far better 'ole
Is a job as a tickler of keys.

Oh, for the days when applause was my fate!
(I can still hear the hand-clapping din)
Then they adored every hair on my pate—
And what's more, all my subjects PAID IN!

SONG OF THE CONSUMER

The costa livin's coming down.
The FAIR PRICE-LIST does show it;
My grocer, though, must be a clown—
He doesn't seem to know it.

"Butter's Falling, Likewise Meat,"
That's how the price-list words it;
My butcher either is a cheat
Or else he hasn't heard it.

"Fresh Country Eggs Are Cheaper Now,"
The headlines bid me heed it;
But still my grocer, Adolf Blau,
Just says, "I didn't read it."

Hence every time I go to shop
I go prepared for heavy touch;
I know the headline, "PRICES DROP,"
Just means they'll soak me twice as much.

COMMUNING WITH SPIRITS

In hunting a spirit
I never get near it—
My wires get crossed, and it's funny
How without exception
I fall for deception
And ring up some ghost I owe money.

A strange hollow tapping
To-day caught me napping;
I listened and listened until
I followed the tapping—
My tailor was rapping
Outside of my door with a bill!

Last night I heard noises
Like far distant voices
Sir Oliver Lodge might have sent;
I cried: " 'Tis the spirits!"
And heard: "Never fear, it's
Your landlord who's after the rent."

A friend of mine tells me
In one of his spells he
Tried to commune with a feller,
But got the wrong ghost
Who proceeded to roast
Him for once having swiped his umbrella

So I'm tempted to think
That I'm no Maeterlinck,
And that ghosts take delight when they balk you;
For it's very annoying
(Not a thing I'm enjoying)
Getting spirits I don't want to talk to.

WHERE MOST WHITE PAPER GOES

Though paper's so short we must ration each page
And our plans are all criss-cross and checkered,
We'd all have enough to go on for an age—
If they'd stop the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD!

In the September "Confessional" Luke McLuke of the Cincinnati Enquirer will appear.

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Mary Wollaston

By Henry Kitchell Webster

Author of "The Real Adventure," "The White Arc," etc.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

John Arrives

TWO or three hours after March and Mary came to the Dearborn Avenue house that Sunday morning, a little before eight o'clock, to be precise, John Wollaston, deterred by humane considerations from ringing the doorbell, tried his latch-key first and found it sufficient. Rather surprisingly, since his sister was particular about bolts and chains. But this mild sensation was engulfed the next moment in clear astonishment when he encountered in the drawing-room doorway Anthony March.

The piano-tuner was coatless and in his socks. Evidently it was no less recent an event than the sound of the latch-key which had roused him from sleep.

"Oh," he said, "it's you, sir!" And added, as he came a little wider awake, "I'm very glad you've come."

John detected a reservation of some sort in this afterthought; faintly ironic perhaps. There was, at any rate, a conspicuous absence of any implication that his presence was urgently needed just then, or eagerly waited for.

He replied with an irony a little more marked: "It's an unexpected pleasure to find you here. They're wanting you rather badly up at High Forest these days, I understand."

March nodded, cast a glance in the direction of the stairs and led the way decisively into the drawing-room. His pantomime made it clear that he did not wish the rest of the slumbering household aroused. Considerate of him, of course, and all that, but the decisiveness of the action, as if he somehow felt himself in charge, despite the arrival of his host, roused in John a faint hostility.

He followed nevertheless. He saw at once where his unaccountable visitor had made his bed. A big cane davenport had been dragged into the bay window, its velvet cushions neatly stacked on the piano-bench, and the composer's coat, rolled with the expertness of experience, served him for a pillow. Not a bad bed for such a night as this that John himself had sweltered through so unsuccessfully. Probably the coolest place in the house, right by those open south windows. But all the same——

"Couldn't Rush do better for you than that?" he asked. "There must be a dozen beds in the house."

"Rush isn't here," March said. "I believe he went to Lake Geneva yesterday for over Sunday."

John Wollaston felt the blood come up into his face as the conviction sprang into his mind that Lucile wasn't here either. She'd never have left the front door unbolted. She'd never have permitted a guest, however explicit his preferences, to sleep upon the cane davenport in the drawing-room with his coat for a pillow.

It was as if March had followed his train of thought step by step.

"Miss Wollaston isn't here either," he said. "She was detained by a broken spring in the car. I believe she expects to arrive this morning."

A faint amusement showed in his face and presently brightened into a smile. "I'm really very relieved," he added, "that it was you who got here first."

And then his smile vanished and his voice took a new timbre, not of challenge, certainly not of defiance, but, all the more for that, of authority. "The only other person in the house is Mary."

A sudden weakness of the legs caused John to seat himself, with what appearance of deliberation he could manage, in the nearest chair. March, however, remained on his feet.

"I brought her home last night," he went on, "very late—early this morning rather—with the intention of leaving her here alone. But I decided to stay. Also it was her preference that I should. I expect she's asleep. She promised, at least, to call me if she didn't."

That, apparently, finished for the present what he had to say. He turned—it really was rather gentle the way he disengaged himself from the fixity of John's look—replaced the cushions on the cane davenport, and then, seating himself, began putting on his shoes.

Precisely that gentleness, though it checked on John's tongue the angry question, "What the devil were you doing with her until early this morning?" only added to his anger by depriving it of a target. For a minute he sat inarticulate, boiling.

IT WAS an outrageous piece of slacking on Rush's part that he should have deserted his sister before the arrival of one or the other of his promised reenforcements relieved him of his duty. It was inexcusable of Lucile to let a trivial matter like a broken spring keep her at Hickory Hill. There were plenty of trains, weren't there? And the third rail every hour? It was shockingly disingenuous of Mary, when she talked with him over the telephone yesterday afternoon, to have suppressed the essential fact that Rush had already deserted her and that she was at that moment alone.

And then his anger turned on himself, as a voice within him asked whether, on his conscience, he could affirm that that knowledge would have made a difference in his own actions. Could he be sure he wouldn't have clutched at the assurance that his sister was already on the way, rather than have exacerbated his quarrel with Paula by doing the one thing that would annoy her most.

Laboriously he got himself together, steadied himself. "You mustn't think," he said, "that I'm not grateful. We're all grateful, of course, to you for having done what our combined negligence appears to have made necessary." Then his voice hardened and the ring of anger crept into it as he added: "You may be sure that nothing of the sort will occur again."

"No," March said dryly, "it won't occur again." He straightened up and faced John Wollaston squarely. "I've persuaded Mary to marry me," he said.

"To marry *you!*" John echoed blankly.

For a moment, before his mind began to work, he merely stared. The first thought that managed to struggle through was a reluctant recognition of the fact that there was a sort of dignity in the man which even the stale look, inevitable about one who has just slept in his clothes, could not overcome. No more than his pallor and the lines of fatigue deeply marked in his face could impeach his air of authority. There was something to him not quite accountable under any of the categories John was in the habit of applying. So much John had conceded from the first; from that morning, in this very room, when he had found him tuning the Circassian grand and had gone away, shutting the door over yonder, so that Paula shouldn't hear.

But that Mary should seriously contemplate marrying him! Mary! Good God!

ONCE more March disengaged himself from John's fixed gaze. Not at all as if he couldn't support it; gently, again, by way of giving the older man time to recover from his astonishment. He went into the bay and stood looking out the window into the bright, hot, empty street. From where he sat John could see his face in profile. He certainly was damned cool about it.

There recurred to John's mind, a moment during that day's drive he had taken with Mary down South, when he had leaped to the wild surmise that there might be something between those two. She'd been talking about the piano-tuner with what struck him as a surprisingly confident understanding.

She had instantly, he remembered, divined his thought and as swiftly set it at rest. March wasn't, she had said, a person who saved himself up for special people. He was there for anybody, like a public drinking-fountain.

But had she been ingenuous in making that reply to him? Had he really been in her confidence about the man? Obviously not. The only encounter between them he had ever heard about was the one she had upon that day described to him. And Lucile and Rush were evidently as completely in the dark about the affair as he himself had been. Their meetings, their numerous meetings, must have been clandestine. That Mary, his own white little daughter, should be capable of an affair like that!

Another memory flashed into his mind. The evening of that same day when she had tried to tell him why she couldn't marry Graham. She wasn't, she had said, innocent enough for Graham, she wasn't even quite—good.

The horror of the conclusion he seemed

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to be drifting upon literally, for a moment, nauseated John Wollaston. The sweat felt cold upon his forehead. And then, white hot, bracing him like brandy, a wave of anger.

Some preliminary move toward speaking evidently caught March's ear, for he turned alertly and looked. It was one of the oddest experiences John Wollaston had ever had. The moment he met March's gaze, the whole infernal pattern, like an old-fashioned set-piece in fireworks, extinguished itself as suddenly as it had flared. There was something indescribable in this man's face that simply made grotesque the notion that he could be a blackguard. John felt himself clutching at his anger to keep him up, but the momentary belief which had fed it was gone.

March's face darkened too. "If you have any idea," he said, "that I've taken any advantage—or attempted to take any——"

"No," John said quickly, "I don't believe anything like that. I confess that there was a moment just now when it looked like that; when I couldn't make it look like anything else. It is still quite unaccountable to me. That explanation is discarded—but I'd like the real one."

"I DON'T believe," March said, reflecting over it for a moment, "that there is any explanation that I could give that would make it much more accountable. We love each other. That is a fact that, unaccountable or not, we both had to recognize a number of weeks ago. I didn't ask her to marry me until last night. I wouldn't have asked her then if it hadn't become clear to me that her happiness depended upon it as much as mine did. When she was able to see that the converse was also true, we—agreed upon it."

"What I asked for," John said, his voice cold and hard with a new anger, "was an explanation. What you have offered is altogether inadequate—if it can be called an explanation at all." He wrenched his eyes away from March's face. "I've liked you," he went on, "I've liked you despite the fact that I've had some excuse for entertaining a contradictory feeling. And I concede your extraordinary talents. But it remains true that you're not—the sort of man I'd expect my daughter to marry. Nor, unless I could see some better reason than I see now, permit her to marry."

This was farther than, in cold blood, he'd have gone. But the finding of a stranger here, in his own place (any man would have been a stranger when it came as close as this to Mary), professing to understand her needs, to see with the clear eye of certainty where her happiness lay, angered and outraged him. The more for an irresistible conviction that the profession was true. But that word, "permit," went too far. He wasn't enough of an old-fashioned parent to believe, at all whole-heartedly, that Mary was his to dispose of.

Again he looked up at the man's face, braced for the retort his challenge had laid him open to, and once more the expression he saw there—a thing as momentary as a shimmer of summer lightning—told him more than anything within the resources of rhetoric could have effected. It was something a little less than a smile that flashed across March's face, a look half pitiful, half ironic. It told John Wollaston that his permission was not needed. The march of events had got beyond him. He was superseded. This rather shabbily dressed, tired man, who stood before him with none of the sanctions of position or success was still, by virtue of some quality he possessed, some inner illumination that sufficed him to walk by, enough of an Olympian to smile and pity.

John dropped back limp in his chair. March seated himself too, and leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, his hands clasped.

"I know how it must look to you, sir," he said gravely. "Even the social aspect of the thing, in the narrowest sense of the word, is serious. And there are other difficulties harder to get over than that. I don't think I minimize any of them. And I don't believe that Mary does. But the main thing is a fact that can't be escaped. If we face that first——"

He broke off there for a moment and John saw him grip his hands together. It was with a visible effort that he went on.

"One of the things Mary said last night was that sentimentality was the cruelest thing in the world. It caused more tragedies she said than malice. What she meant by sentimentality was a refusal to recognize a fact; the attempt to substitute some image or ideal for it. That is something she has learned by experience. It's not an experience she can safely go through again."

It was in an automatic effort to defend himself against the conviction he felt closing down upon him, that John lashed out here with a reply.

"The fact you're asking me to face is, I suppose, that you two have discovered you're in love with each other to a degree that makes all other considerations negligible."

"That's not quite it," March replied patiently. "A part of it is, that it would have been just as impossible for Mary to marry Graham Stannard if she had never seen me. And if she could forget me completely it would still be impossible for her to marry any one else like him."

John didn't follow that very closely. His emotional focus was still upon the last sentence of March's former speech. "It's not an experience she can safely go through again." What did he mean by that? How much did he mean by that? Would John if he could, plumb the full depth of that meaning? There was no use fighting any longer. He managed a smile as he surrendered.

"THE simplest way of stating the fact, I suppose," he said, "is that you two mean to marry and that you're satisfied that your reasons for making the decision are valid. Well, if Mary corroborates you, as I have no doubt she will, I'll face that fact as realistically as possible. I'll agree not to, as you put it, sentimentalize."

Then he got up and held out his hand. "I mean that for a better welcome than it sounds," he concluded. And if there was no real feeling of kindliness for his prospective son-in-law behind the words, there was what came to the same thing, a realization that this feeling was bound to come in time. No candid-minded person could keep alive, for very long, a grievance against Anthony March.

The physician in him spoke automatically while their hands were gripped. "Good lord, man! You're about at the end of your rope. Exhausted—that's what I mean. How long is it since you've fed?"

March was vague about this; wouldn't be drawn into the line John had been diverted into. He answered another question or two of the same tenor with half his mind and finally said, with the first touch of impatience he had betrayed, "I'm all right. That can wait. There's one more thing I want to say before you talk to Mary."

HE seemed grateful for John's permission to sit down again, dropped into his chair in a way that suggested he might have fallen into it in another minute, and took the time he visibly needed for getting his wits into working order again.

"I think I can see how the prospect must look to you," he began. "The difficulties and objections that you see are, I guess, the same ones that appeared to me: The fact that I'm not in her world at all; that I've never even tried to succeed or get on, nor even to earn a decent living; and that however hard I work to change all that, it will only be by perfectly extraordinary luck if I can manage to make a life for her that will be, externally, anywhere near as good a life as the one she's always taken for granted.

"It won't be as much worse though, as you are likely to think. With the help she'll give me I shall be able to earn a decent living. Unless that opera of mine fails—laughably, and I don't believe it will, up at High Forest, it will help quite a lot. Make it possible for me to get some pupils in composition. And I know I can write some songs that will be publishable and singable for persons who aren't musicians like Paula. I did write two or three for the boys in Bordeaux that went pretty well. That sort of thing didn't seem worth while to me then and I never went on with it.

"Oh, you know how I feel about it. How I've talked about traveling light and not letting my life get cluttered up. But that isn't really the thing that's changed. I've never been willing to pay, in liberty and leisure, for things I didn't want. The only difference is that there's something now that I do want. And I shan't shirk paying for it. I want you to understand that."

He stressed the word "you" in a way that puzzled John a little, but what he went on to say after a moment's hesitation made his meaning clear:

"That's preliminary. You'll find that Mary's misgivings—she's not without them, and they won't be easy to overcome—aren't the same as ours. Those aren't the things that she's afraid of. She's afraid of taking my liberty away from me. She won't be able to believe, easily, that my old vagabond ways have lost their importance for me; that they're a phase I can afford to outgrow. She's likely to think I've sacrificed something essential in going regularly to work, giving lessons, writing popular songs. Of course, it will rest mostly with me to satisfy her that that isn't true, but any help you can give her along that line I'll be grateful for. Last night she seemed convinced far enough to give me her promise, but——"

Words faded away there into an uneasy silence. John looked intently into the man's face, saw him wrestling, he thought, with some idea, some fear, some sort of

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nightmare horror which, with all the power of his will, he was struggling not to give access to. He pressed his clenched hands against his eyes.

"What is it?" John asked sharply. "What's the matter?"

"It's nothing," March said between his teeth. "She promised, as I said. She told me I needn't be afraid." Then he came to his feet with a gesture of surrender, "Will you let me see her?" he asked John. "Now. Just for a minute before I go?"

John by that time was on his feet too, staring. "What do you mean, man? Afraid of what? What is it you're afraid of?"

March didn't answer the question in words, but for a moment he met her father's gaze eye to eye, and what John saw was enough.

"Good God!" he whispered. "Why—why didn't you—" Then turning swiftly toward the door. "Come along."

"I'm really not afraid," March panted as he followed him up the stairs, "because of her promise. It was just a twinge."

Her door at the foot of the stairs which led to the music-room at the top of the house stood wide open, but both men came to an involuntary breathless pause outside it. Then John went swiftly in, looked for a brief moment at the figure that slept so gently in the narrow little bed, gave a reassuring nod to March who had hung back in the doorway, a nod that invited him in; then turned away and covered his face with his hands just for one steadying instant until the shock of that abominable fear should pass away.

WHEN he looked again March stood at the bedside gazing down into the girl's face. It was as if his presence there were palpable to her. She opened her eyes sleepily, smiled a fleeting contented little smile, and held up her arms to her lover. He smiled, too, and bent down and kissed her. Then as the arms that had clasped his neck slipped down, he straightened, nodded to John, and went back to the door. John followed, and for a moment, just outside the room, they talked in whispers.

"I'm going home now," March said. "To my father's house—not the other place. There's a telephone there if she wants me. But I'll call, anyhow, before I go to High Forest this afternoon."

It was he, this time, who held out his hand.

"You can trust her with me in the meantime, I think," John said as he took it, but the irony of that was softened by a smile. March smiled too, and with no more words went away.

Her eyes turned upon John when he came back into the room, wide open but still full of sleep. When he stood once more beside her bed a pat of her hand invited him to sit down upon the edge of it.

"He really was here, wasn't he?" she asked. "I wasn't just dreaming?"

"No, he was here," John said.

Her eyelids drooped again. "I'm having the loveliest dreams," she told him. "I suppose I ought to be waking up. What time is it?"

"It's still very early. Only about half-past eight. Go back to sleep."

"Have you had breakfast?" she asked. "Pete's wife, out in the garage, will come in and get it for you."

"When I feel like breakfast I'll see to it that I get some," he said, rising.

Once more she roused herself a little, "Stay here then, for a while," she said. "Pull that chair up close."

When he had planted the easy chair in the place she indicated, and seated himself in it, she gave him one of her hands to hold. But in another minute she was fast asleep.

And that, you know, was the hottest, most intolerable sting of all. He was sore, of course, all over. He had been badly battered during the past four days. Some of those moments with March down-stairs had been like blows from a bludgeon. But his daughter's sleepy attempt to concern herself about his breakfast. and the perfunctory caress of that slack unconscious hand, had the effect of the climax of it all.

She'd just been through the crisis of her life. She'd been down chin-deep in the black waters of tragedy (he didn't yet know, he told himself, what the elements of the crisis were nor the poisonous springs of the tragedy), and all her father meant to her was a domestic responsibility—some one that breakfast must be provided for!

HE managed to control his release of her hand and his rising from his chair, so that these actions should not be so brusk as to waken her again and, swiftly leaving the room, went down to his own.

That was the way with children. They remained a part of you but you were never a part of them. Mary having awakened for her lover, smiled at him, been reassured by his kiss, and been content to drop off to sleep again. Her father didn't matter. Not even his derelictions mattered.

He had been derelict. He didn't pretend to evade that. He could have forgiven her reproaches; welcomed them. But thanks to March, she had nothing to reproach him for. The presence of a man she had known a matter of weeks obliterated past years like the writing on a child's slate. He tried to erect an active resentment against the composer. Didn't all his troubles go back to the day the man had come to tune the drawing-room piano? First Paula, and then Mary.

None of this was very real and he knew it. There was an underlying stratum of his consciousness that this didn't get down to at all, which, when it managed to get a word in edgewise, labeled it mere petulance, a childish attempt to find solace for his hurts in building up a grievance, a whole fortress of grievances to take shelter in against the bombardment of facts.

Was this the quality of his bitter four-days quarrel with Paula? Was the last accusation she had hurled at him last night before she shut herself in her room a fact? "Of course, I'm jealous of Mary," she had acknowledged furiously when he charged her with it. "You don't care anything about me except for your pleasure. Down there in Tryon, when you didn't want that, you got rid of me and sent for Mary instead. If that weren't true, you wouldn't have been so anxious all these years that I shouldn't have a child."

No, that wasn't the fact! It couldn't be twisted into a fact. If he had refrained from urging motherhood upon her, if he'd given her the benefit of his special knowledge, didn't her interest in her career as a singer establish the presumption that it was her wish rather than his that they were following? Had she ever said she'd like to have a baby? Or even hinted?

He pulled himself up. There was no good going over that again.

He bathed and shaved and dressed himself in fresh clothes, operations which had been perforce omitted at the cottage this morning in favor of his departure without arousing Paula. He'd slept, or rather lain awake, upon the hammock in the veranda. When he came down-stairs he found Pete's wife already in the kitchen, gave her directions about his breakfast and then, from force of habit, thought of his morning paper. The delivery of it had been discontinued, of course, for the month the house was closed, so he walked down to Division Street to get one.

He had got his mind into a fairly quiescent state by then, which made the trick it played when he first caught sight of the great stacks of *Tribunes* and *Heralds* on the corner news-stand all the more terrifying. It had the force of an hallucination; as if in the headlines he actually saw the word SUICIDE in thick letters, and his daughter's name underneath.

He had managed, somehow, to evade that word; to refrain from putting into any words at all the peril Mary had so narrowly escaped, although the fact had hung, undisguised, between him and March during the moment they stared at each other before they went up-stairs together. It avenged that evasion by leaping upon him now. He bought his paper and hurried home with it under his arm, feeling as if it might still contain the news of that tragedy and that disgrace.

Reacting from this perfectly irrational panic he tried, naturally enough, to discount the whole thing. March hadn't lied, of course, but, being a lover, he had exaggerated. As John sat over his breakfast he got to feeling quite comfortable about this. His mind went back to the breakfast he had had with Mary at High Forest—breakfast after much such an abominable night as this last had been—the breakfast they had left for that talk under the trees beside the lake. And then his own words came back and stabbed him.

He had been arguing with her his right to extinguish himself if he chose. He had said he had no religion real enough to make a valid denial of that right. It was a question no one else could presume to decide. How much more had he said to that sensitive, nerve-drawn child of his? He remembered how white she had gone for a moment a little later. And he had pretended not to see! Just as he had been pretending, a few minutes back, to doubt the reality of the peril March had saved her from. What a liar he was!

Sentimentality, March had quoted Mary as saying, was the cruelest thing in the world. And he had defined sentimentality as a refusal to face facts; as an attempt to put some tolerable image or ideal into the place of an intolerable fact. John stood convicted now of that cruelty toward his daughter. Was he guilty of it, also, toward his wife? Did their quarrel boil down to that?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Settling Paula

ANTHONY MARCH might deny as he pleased that he was "enough of an Olympian to laugh" at life's ironies, but it remains true that his God had a sense

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When he came back into the wings from his fourth recall, he saw her face shining with joy through her tears.

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of humor and that March himself appreciated it. When, well within the twenty-four hours that had begun when Jennie MacArthur brought Mary to his room over the grocery store, a third member of the Wollaston family, namely Paula, descended upon this proud exponent of the philosophy of traveling light, to tell him her troubles and ask him what she'd best do about them, he conceded with the flicker of an inward grin (not at all at the troubles, which were serious enough, nor at their sufferer, who was in despair) that the great Disposer, having set out to demolish that philosophy, enjoyed making a thorough job of it.

IT WAS about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon that he came to Paula's cottage at High Forest to get the score to "The Outcry." The maid who opened the door informed him that her mistress wasn't at home, but when he told her what he wanted, and she had gone rather dubiously up-stairs to see about it, it was Paula herself who, after a wait of ten minutes or so, came down with the manuscript in her hand.

He was perhaps just the one person in the world she'd have come down to see. All the explanation she volunteered to herself was that he didn't matter. It didn't matter, this was to say, if he did perceive that she had been crying for days and days and looked an utter wreck.

And then his errand brought her a touch of comfort. The acceptance of "The Outcry" for production restored the proprietary feeling she once had had about it. She was the discoverer of "The Outcry" and if you'd asked her who was responsible for the revival of interest in it and for the fact that it was now to be produced, I think she'd have told you quite honestly that she was. Hadn't she asked them all to come to her house to hear it? And sung the part of *Dolores* herself at that very informal audition?

And I'll hazard one further guess. It is that her quarrel with John made March's opera a rather pleasanter thing to dwell on a little. She had taken it up in defiance of his wish in the first place; her abandonment of it had acquired from its context the color of a self-sacrificial impulse. She would carry out her contract, she had told John down in Tryon, but she wouldn't sing *Dolores* for anybody. Well, now that her love-life with John was irremediably wrecked, there was a sort of melancholy satisfaction in handling, once more, the thing that stood as the innocent symbol of disaster.

That's neither here nor there, of course. Paula was totally unaware of any such constellation about her simple act of deciding to carry down the score herself instead of handing it over to the maid.

The sight of him standing over the piano in her sitting-room cheered her and the look of melancholy she brought down-stairs with her was replaced by a spontaneous unexpected smile. Just as Mary, out at Hickory Hill, had predicted, she remembered how well she liked him. She laid the manuscript on the piano in order to give him both hands.

"I can't tell you how pleased I am about it," she said. "I wish you all the luck in the world."

He brightened responsively at that, but looked, she thought, a little surprised too.

"I am glad you're pleased about it," he told her. "I wasn't quite sure you'd know. Of course, they telephoned."

She stepped back, puzzled. "But of course I know!" she said. "Haven't I been working on it for weeks? Why, it was right here in this room that they decided on it. Days ago. I've been trying frantically to find you ever since."

"Oh," he said, "you mean 'The Outcry.' I thought you were congratulating me on my engagement to marry Mary."

She stared at him in simple blank incredulity. "To marry Mary?—Mary Wollaston? You don't mean that seriously!"

"It's the only serious fact in the world," he assured her.

"But John—does John know about it?" she demanded.

"Yes," he said.

She drew a long breath, then pounced upon him with another question. "Did you tell him about it, or was it Mary who did?"

"It was I," March said. "I was the first one to see him after it happened."

"He hadn't suspected anything, had he?" she persisted.

She was vaguely aware that he was a little puzzled and perhaps in the same degree amused by her intensity, but she had no interest in half tones of that sort.

When he answered in the sense that she expected, "No, I can testify to that: he was taken completely by surprise when I broke it to him," she heaved another long breath, turned away, and sat down heavily in the nearest chair.

"Poor old John!" she said. But she didn't let that exclamation go uninterpreted. "I didn't mean anything—personal by that," she went on. "Only—I didn't think John could make up his mind to let her marry—anybody." Then in a rush—an aside, to be sure, but one he was welcome to hear if he chose—"He wanted her so much all to himself!"

Whether he heard it or not, he failed, she thought, to attach any special significance to that last comment of hers. He said that John had been very nice about it, though he was, as any father would be under the circumstances, taken aback. He had consented to regard the arrangement as an accomplished fact and would, March hoped, in time be fully reconciled to it. Then he went back rather quickly to the matter of his opera.

"OF COURSE, it means more than ever to me now," he said, putting his hand on the manuscript, "to get this produced. If it goes moderately well, it will help in a good many ways."

She found some difficulty in again focusing her mind upon this theme and answered absently and rather at random, until she perceived that he was getting ready to take his leave. He was saying something about an appointment with LaChaise.

"Is it at once?" she asked. "Do you have to go right away?"

"I'm to have dinner with him and his secretary, who can talk English, at six," March said, "but I thought I'd carry this off somewhere and read it before I talked with them. It's been a long way out of my mind this past three months."

"Don't go," Paula said. "It seems so—so nice to have you here. Sit down here and read your score. Then you'll have a piano handy in case you want to hear anything." She added as she saw him hesitate, "I won't bother you—but I'm feeling awfully lonely to-day."

At that, of course, he relinquished, though a little dubiously she thought, his intention to go. She set about energetically making matters convenient for him, cleared a small table of its litter and set it in the window where he would have the best light; chose a chair for him to sit in, urged him to take off his coat; and began looking about for something for him to smoke—but not quite successfully. She was sure there were some cigarets of Mary's somewhere about.

He didn't care to smoke just now, he said. If he felt later like resorting to a pipe he would.

Was there anything else? Didn't he want a pencil and paper to make notes on? No, he was supplied with everything, he said.

BUT for all the ardor of these preparations of hers, she was a little disconcerted and vaguely aggrieved at the way he took her at her word and plunged into the study of his score.

She found herself a novel and managed for five minutes or so, to pretend to read. Then she flung it aside and drifted over to the piano bench and after gazing moodily awhile at the keyboard, began in a fragmentary way to play little bits of nothing that came into her head. But she stopped herself short in manifest contrition when happening to look around at him, she saw a knot of baffled concentration in his forehead.

"Of course, you can't read if I do that," she said. "I'm sorry." Then under cover of the same interruption, "How did John look when you saw him this morning? Like a wreck? What time was it, anyway? It must have been frightfully early that he left here because I waked as soon as it was really light and he was gone by then."

"I don't know that he looked particularly a wreck," March said. "Not any worse, I mean, than he looked out at Hickory Hill the day you opened the season here."

"He didn't say anything about me, did he?" she asked.

"No," March said, "I don't think he did."

She gave a ragged laugh. "I suppose you'd remember it if he'd happened to tell you that he loathed and hated me and never wanted to see me again." Then she rose and went over to the opposite side of his little table from where he sat and, leaning down, spread her hands out over his score.

"Oh, I know I said I wouldn't bother, but do stop thinking about this and talk to me for a minute. We're having a perfectly hideous time. He and I. We've been fighting like cat and dog for four days. I don't exactly know what it's all about, except that it seems we hate each other and can't go on. You've got to tell me what to do. It all started with you anyway with the time you brought around those Whitman songs. That was the day Mary came home from New York, too," she added.

"All right," he said, shutting down the cover upon his manuscript, "then Mary and I will try to patch you up—that is, if we haven't already done so."

Her face darkened during the long moment she stared into his. "Don't try to

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But she was a little disconcerted at the way he took her at her word and plunged into the study of his score.

talk the way they do," she commanded. "I'm not intelligent enough to take hints. Do you mean that the whole trouble is that I'm jealous of Mary? And that now she's going to marry you I'll have nothing to be jealous of? Well, you're wrong both ways. There's more to it than that. And that isn't going to stop just because she's marrying you. She'll always be there for him. And he'll be there for her. You'll find that out before you've gone far."

HE DIDN'T seem disposed to dispute this, nor to be much perturbed about it, either. He annoyed her by saying, "Well, if it's a permanent fact, like snow in February, what's the good of taking it so hard?"

"You can go south in February," she retorted. Then she went on, "I want to know if you don't think I've a right to be jealous of her. I'd saved his life. He admitted that. But when we went south, afterward, he simply didn't want me around. Sent me home, pretending I'd be wanted for rehearsals. And then he sent for her. They spent a week together talking! As far as that goes, they could have done it just as well if I'd been there. They can talk right over my head and I never know what it's all about. Wait till they begin doing that with you! I don't suppose they will, though. You're a talker, too. He told her things he'd never told me—about his money troubles. What he said to me was that he didn't want to stand in the way of my career. He left her to tell me the truth about it, later, after I'd told him I didn't want any career—though I'd just been offered the best chance I ever had. And then, when he came and found that I'd done—for him—what he'd been trying to make me do for myself, he was furious. We fought all night about it. And when I came down the next morning, ready to do anything he wanted me to, he'd wandered off with Mary. To talk me over with her again—tell her some more things, I suppose, that I didn't know about."

March had nothing to interpose here, it seemed, in Mary's defense, for her pause gave him ample opportunity to do so. He merely nodded reflectively and loaded and lighted his pipe.

"Well," she demanded presently, "can you see now that there's something more to it than jealousy? Whatever I try to do, he fights. When I wanted to begin singing again, last spring, he fought that. And when I wanted to give it all up, after he'd so nearly died, he wouldn't let me. And when I refused the best chance I'd ever had, for him, and then changed around and accepted it because of him, he seemed to hate me for doing that. And he simply boiled when I told him I'd gone and got the money, myself, from Wallace Hood."

"Yes," March said, so decisively that he startled her, "I know all about it up to there. That was Thursday afternoon, wasn't it? Go on from then."

The interruption disconcerted her. "There isn't much more to tell," she went on, but a good deal less impetuously, "except that we fought and fought and fought. About eight o'clock that night I said I was going to the Park to see the performance just to get a rest from talking. Kahn was there and the Williamsons and James Wallace, so I asked them all to come home with us. And Fournier and LaChaise, too. And we got on your opera and LaChaise played part of it and then I read a lot of it with Fournier. So they didn't go home till after three. John thought I was keeping them there in order not to be left alone with him. Well, what *was* the good of talking, anyhow? We did get started again on Friday, though; all day long. And Friday night we—made up, in a way. At least, I thought we did.

"Well, and then, yesterday morning Rush telephoned out from town and said he thought John ought to come in and see Mary. She wasn't very well. I told him to go if he liked. I was feeling perfectly awful, yesterday, myself—and I was billed for *Thais* last night. There isn't another soprano up here who wouldn't have canceled it, feeling the way I did. But I told John that if he thought Mary needed him more than I did, he'd better go. I wish he had gone. After he'd telephoned to say he wasn't coming—he'd talked to Mary herself, that time—he kept getting colder and gloomier and more unendurable from hour to hour. And after the performance we had the most horrible fight of all. He told me I had kept him away from Mary on purpose—because I was jealous of her. He

(*Continued on page 76*)

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Prose or Worse

by

Gridley Adams

(Wayne County, Ohio, Democrat)

On Wednesday evening sixty chickens were stolen from Perry Coterman, who lives north of the city. His neighbor, George Newell, also suffered the loss of a large number.

The attendance at the chicken-supper given by the men of the United Presbyterian Church on Thursday evening was very good.

Please help Perry and George to some more of the neck.

(Dallas City, Illinois, Enterprise)

Attorney Truman Plantz, of Warsaw, delivered a patriotic address, the meeting being very largely attended. Mr. Plantz is a great orator, and our community truly appreciated his coming here. While he was somewhat handicapped in that he was "breaking in" a set of new teeth, yet his speech was a great one, and the patriotic fervor put forth shall long be remembered.

He just champed at the bit.

(Sandoval, Illinois, Independent)

Grace Ross and Ethel McClelland spent Monday afternoon with Flora McClelland.

Ethel and Flora McClelland spent Friday afternoon with Mrs. Etta Day.

Ethel McClelland spent Friday night with Flora McClelland.

Mrs. Sarah E. McClelland and daughter Ethel spent Tuesday afternoon with Mrs. Emma Ross and children.

And probably are still going.

(Plymouth Republican)

Miss Frances Hall, aged nine years, while turning the crank of a corn-sheller for her mother caught her sleeve on the crank and her hand was jerked into the wheels. Mrs. Hall in the excitement went to call for help, when her false teeth came down so she couldn't make a sound. Taking her teeth from her mouth, she called in the neighbors, but before they got there Frances' hand had been extracted from the sheller, to find that no bones had been broken, but her hand and fingers were badly bruised. Clarence Sanner, hearing the calling and seeing the excitement, tied his horses to the fence and ran with all his might to the rescue. Just as he arrived on the scene he met William Marks and stopped him, but was so out of breath he could not tell what was wrong. Eight men came in answer to the call.

In which one thing just had to lead to another.

(Joliet Herald-News)

A married man wanted with some knowledge of bookkeeping to operate a Ford car. Steady position.

Did you say "steady"?

(Escanaba Press)

There is a fascination in the singing of these men from Wales that makes a listener spellbound while his soul is transported on the pinions of inspiration into realms he never explored in his life before. It is worth a whole lifetime to spend only an hour under the influence of the music of this magnificent organization.

Boy, bring me the railway guide.

(From the Billboard)

Earl McCormac expresses the gratitude of his wife for the many words of cheer during her recent illness from the Bedouins

Bedouins *are* extremely irritating.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

Ad of a hospital in Philip, South Dakota: "*Maternity hospital. Female patients only.*"

Sign in Alma, Michigan, hotel bathroom: "*Swipe the tub when through.*"

In a theatre in Alpena, Michigan: "*Pass away one quiet evening here.*"

In Japan: "*Milk without adultery.*"

In Portsmouth, Ohio: "*For Sale, female billy-goat.*"

In South Holland, Illinois: "*Dr. Kettels—Dentists every Friday.*"

In Chicago: "*Come in and surprise yourself.*" "*Free soup given away.*" "*Seating capacity 1,000 seats.*"

In Peoria restaurant: "*Dinning Room.*" (Jass band?)

In a Hyde Park boarding-house: "*Guests desiring hot-water baths should arrange beforehand to avoid conflict and disappointment.*"

In the hall of a Duluth fraternal organization: "*The seats in this hall are for the use of the ladies. Gentlemen are requested to take them only after the ladies have been seated.*"

(Sheridan, Wyoming, Enterprise)

For Sale—Stork mine. Will not lease. Call Mrs. Stork, 513 Main.

Will some one take a flyer?

(York, Pennsylvania, Daily)

Lost Notice—Every person please take notice. If you see a French poodle dog wandering in streets or any place, please try and get her in a yard and bring her to Harry Blauser, 373 Norway Street, York, or call up on York phone, and we will come and pay you the reward. She has made very sad hearts. We have no children and put all our time on her. Please answer my ad. Later will give them a pup and two dollars reward.

Oh, grief, where is thy pup?

(Chicago Tribune)

SITUATION WANTED—Chauffeur; married, absolutely sober; no other bad habits.

Well, those three are bad enough.

(Received by a Kankakee Clothing Company)

Gentlemen: I purchased a pair of white trousers from you people last week. I put them on the other day and you could see right through them. I wear knee-length underwear and this can be seen right through them. I don't like to wear them under these conditions. Let me hear from you. Yours truly, etc.

A little embroidery on the k. l. u. might distract the attention.

(From Vermont paper)

It will soon be time for Paris green. You want the best and we have it in convenient pound and half pound packages. A fresh line for that Sunday outing or picnic always on hand. DUKE & HARRIGAN.

Please pass the greens.

(Beardstown Illinoian-Star)

The bride is a pleasing young woman well known in Beardstown's younger social set, and enjoys the acquaintance of every one who knows her.

Yes, I got you the first time.

(Tampico, Illinois, Tornado)

An unfortunate accident occurred at Owen Graham's farm when Chris Johnson, one of the hired men, was kicked on the nose between the eyes by a horse. He is reported to be getting along very nicely in spite of the severity of the wound. The injury was the result of a combination of accidental circumstances over which neither Mr. Johnson nor Mr. Graham had any control and can in no way be blamed. Mr. Johnson was at his accustomed work cleaning the stables in the semi-darkness of early morn, and without looking up and also thinking he had the handle end of the fork, told the horse to "get over," touching it with the fork as is customary. Unfortunately he touched the animal unknowingly and unintentionally with the tine end, and it irritated in this unaccustomed manner, kicked. The horse is not vicious and never has been. It is one of the old Thompson team, known to farmers south of town as a peaceful, plodding pair, and this one a quiet old horse. Mr. Johnson did not intentionally jab the animal with the tine end of the fork and in the darkness did not know that he had done so until after the horse had kicked. It was an accident pure and simple in which every one's intentions were right but where bad luck played its trumps.

Even the pitchfork apologized.

(At the Ball Game)

There, that's Ping Bodie stoopin' over. See 'm? There he is now. He's stoopin' up.

Boy, get me "He Stoops to Conquer," by Comiskey.

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

A pulmotor was used by Robertson Undertaking Company, but to no avail. Robertson has the remains.

Simply impossible to beat the undertaker.

(Journal of the American Judicature Society)

"Doctor Hickson spent a year and a half in a feeble-minded institution and then organized the laboratory of the Municipal Court of Chicago."

Sufficiently qualified.

(Sign in Wilmette, Illinois)

"No Wearing Apparel Allowed on Benches or Beach."

Boy, find me a hickory limb that's vacant.

(From the Wisconsin Journal)

The piano recital by Harold Gulbrandsen, Friday evening, was a financial as well as a musical success. It has been seldom that our people have witnessed anything in this line of a superior nature, even from professors in the art much older in years. He exhibited a talent that was surprising to the Black River Falls friends, and earnest appreciation was frequently made manifest throughout the entertainment. His fineness of touch was readily observed, while his calm and unostentatious vigor was the admiration of all observers. While in his violent passages, in which the keys were being touched off at the rate of three hundred per minute, more or less, there was little swaying of the body and about the only noticeable change of expression was a slight reddening of the face and the tightening of the cords in the cheek and neck.

When the cords arose with voluptuous swell.

(Bridgeton, New Jersey, Evening News)

H. L. Adams is back at his store again after having been made ill by eating cabbage which had been frozen. Twenty years ago he was made sick by the same thing, the cabbage having poisoned him both times.

Doesn't the garbage man call every year?

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(Cedar Rapids Commission Company)

All horses must be sound, good eyes, good wind, no side bones, no trace of a curb. They must not be calf-kneed, nigger-heeled nor coon-footed. They must trot square, have good short backs, be in fair flesh and represent a useful horse.

Those eyes, those lips, those nose!

(Ravenswood Citizen)

Confections will be furnished to those who are non-smokers and refreshments of a more substantial nature to those who smoke, others who do not as well as to those who do both.

Well, I guess I'll go anyhow.

(Carrier Mills, Illinois, Mail)

Rex E. Elder, our enterprising ice and coal dealer, is now rejoicing over the arrival of a helper at his home that put in its appearance Sunday morning. Doctor Groce was the medical attendant and is authority for this statement. He says that when the little gentleman arrived Rex was very anxious to weigh him, but there were no scales at hand, so Rex was badly put out until the doctor thought about Rex's ice-wagon scales being handy, and they immediately put them into use, and by the ice scales he weighed thirty big full pounds. The doctor thought the scales exaggerated about eighteen pounds, but Rex said the weight must be correct, for he sold ice by those same scales all the time.

Now we know why it is the ice bill that Rex us.

(Torrington, Wyoming, Telegram)

There was Suse Harkens. She is as big as a skinned horse. She threw a candy-ball slap into the eye of one of the visitors, and he made a bulge to run after her and he heard something rip. He looked around and there was the gable end of his new trousers sticking to the bench, etc. The young folks had a good time and these gatherings help wonderfully to while away the long and weary hours of the homesteader.

Where strength, intelligence and ambition is offered the chance of a life-time.

(Cedar Rapids Republican)

A son has been born to Mr. and Mrs. Will Jones, the father being an Indian.

Will probably be some squawk.

(Bloomington Record)

When pulling out for Glen Haven with the freight wagon Thursday morning, Norman Waitriss was notified by pedestrians on the street that his nose was frozen. He gave up the trip, after explaining that it had started to freeze three times that morning.

Four times and out.

(Mahnomen, Minn., Pioneer)

Geo. Nelson came home from North Dakota Wednesday morning. He had been breaking out on the wheat-line for the past two months.

Shingles?

(Iowa City Citizen)

For sale—Oak music cabinet, mahogany morris chair, baby and push-cart.

Simply just going out of business.

(Fort Madison, Iowa, Gem City)

Notice to the public—William Andrews got stung and won't pay no kind of bills made by his wife, M. E. Andrews. Signed, Wm. Andrews.

She must be of the wasp-waist variety.

(Received by Doctor in Atkins, Arkansas)

Dear Doctor—My wife have lost her recompense for me. She are giving her distributions to another man. I want you to send me something to put in her coffee and make her malignify herself to me again, if you please, sir. Yours truly ——.

Wherewithal shall recompense be salted?

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

In Williamsport, Indiana: "*I will put you in a furnace for* $100."

In Minneapolis: "*Picture framing and embalming neatly done.*"

On the dock of Ephraim, Wisconsin: "*Fishermen, buy your bait at the ice-cream parlor.*"

In Greenwich, Connecticut: "*Kids cleaned any size, ten cents. Bring 'em in.*"

Between Minneapolis and St. Paul: "*Midway Harness Co. Manufacturers of Second-Hand Harness.*"

In Milwaukee: "*Always at your service. Wm. P. Hug.*"

In Chicago: "*C. Schor, Sand and Gravel.*" "*Marcel Waving. Loop Experience.*"

In Council Bluffs: "*Auto lunches put up with loving care.*"

In a Milwaukee restaurant: "*Bulgarian Milk. An aid to imperfect digestion.*"

On a flat building going up in Chicago: "*Millwork by Gosch.*"

(White River, South Dakota, News)

George Jerred and Miss Howlett were quietly married last Saturday by Rev. C. E. Richards at the Congregational Parsonage.

Why the sh-sh-sh?

(Grand Forks Herald)

Wanted—Three clerks with good reputation, one office girl. See Bookkeeper at Geist's.

I bet "bookkeeper" has a batting average that's enviable.

(Patterson, New York, News)

Radiant sun and sparkling snow ushered in the fifteenth, and justly so, for this was Clarence and Iola's wedding day. When young people have trod the paths of righteousness and decorum it is fitting and deserved that the one day of their life should be without a cloud and with promising horizon. The afternoon brought train and sleigh load until the historic home of the bride, where once resounded the cheers and tramping feet of the Revolutionary militiamen in their "general training," was filled with relatives and friends—and the attractive ladies in becoming apparel, stalwart men and youth, with here and there a touch of the olive drab or "khaki"—while the sweet strains of the harp and violin mingling with the merry confusion of voices in social converse within, in sharp but pleasant contrast with the sound of sleigh-bells without, tended to complete an occasion which should occupy a page in the book of memory to be treasured by those present.

And the next day it snowed.

(Fresno Republican)

Wanted—Man with Ford car who has mechanical turn and understands cows.

Any udder accomplishments necessary?

(Burlington Hawkeye)

Mrs. J. L. Vanosdall left Saturday at 11.30 A.M. for Nauvoo, was back at 12.40, then went to the Power City on the noon train and took in two shows.

A regular gadder.

(London Times)

WESTMACOTT—In Calcutta, the wife of R. Westmacott, of a daughter (by cable).

Ain't science getting to be wonderful.

(Beverly Country Club News)

It has been ruled by the authorities of the club that if a member is unmarried, his mother, sister, or a daughter whom he may name is entitled to the same privileges enjoyed by wives of members.

Now let's listen to 'em name a few.

Other collections of "Prose or Worse" will appear in later numbers of EVERYBODY'S.

(Paw Paw Free Press)

Mr. and Mrs. Early Byrd visited his brother in Kalamazoo last week.

What did you say her maiden name was?

(Quincy, Illinois, Herald)

Wanted—A young or middle-aged lady as a housekeeper and companion for a widower. Address ——.

In lonely Illinois?

(Sumner Illini)

The plans are extensive and convey a general idea of the arrangement of the various rooms and halls about the building.

But you never really know just what the architect will finally deliver.

(Milwaukee Times)

The rooms were beautifully decorated with ferns and lilies and Jerusalem. At 6.30 P.M. an elaborate course dinner was served, after which time Mr. Henry Fischer gave a brief recitation of Poe's great masterpiece, "The Raven." Standing in the center of the drawing-room he recited those wonderful lines in the most melodious of voices; gradually becoming omre and more enthused with his theme, he forgot time, spectators, his personal identity, as the wild hopes and repressed longings of his heart found vent in the impassioned words of the poem. To the listeners came the sounds of falling rain and waving branches; the Raven rapped his dusky wings above the bust of Pallas, and the lovely face of Lenore appeared to rise before them. So marvelous was his power as a reader that the auditors were afraid to draw breath lest the enchanted spell be broken.

If he hadn't made it "brief" he never would have come to.

(An Answer to an Ad)

As I saw an advertisement that you wanted a furnished room by a Jewish family, come and take a look at Mrs. ———, — DeKalb Street.

Yes, I saw her first.

A position is wanted in Burlington by an "ex-lady stenographer." Address the *Gazette* if interested.

Sorry, but——

(Idaho Falls Post)

The audience was composed entirely of music lovers, as was evidenced by their applause and manner. Not a sound was audible during the performance.

Fast asleep?

(From Automobile Blue Book for Illinois)

82.6-1.7 Pleasant View, saloon on far left. Turn left, follow winding road.

But why tell everybody where they can get it?

(Marinette, Wisconsin, Searchlight)

The bride of Monday morning was born in Marinette and reared to manhood within the environments of her natal city.

The end of a bachelor maid.

(Grand Rapids News)

The people of Grand Rapids are cordially invited to inspect the magnificent display of funeral supply goods and funeral vehicles in the Klingman Building, Friday evening. Dancing in the south drop-off from 8.30 to 11.

May I see your program?

(Tampa, Iowa, Herald)

George Randolph, well-known hereaway and for the last ten years a resident of Grinnell, left last Thursday for Montana. He thinks of investing in government land thereaway.

Simply a case of impediment in his syntax.

(Canton Ledger)

A long and happy friendship terminated in the wedding last evening of Miss Nell A. Chipping, daughter of Mrs. Cordelia J. Chipping, and Cliff Eshelman.

When friendship is no more.

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Doodle Buys a Bull Pup

By M. F. Reid

JANUARY moved the new year and the new school term into Santa Ynez, and fell to raining with disconcertingly busy industry. But rain or shine, through tooth-ache, pills and leaky shoes, Doodle occupied his hard-acquired seat by the window of Miss Mildred's room. From this seat in mid-January, after being assured that the advance in no way affected his tenure, he accepted promotion to Miss Mildred's high first grade. So also, from less-favored posts, did Dizzy, Emil, Sarah Andina and the rest of Miss Mildred's young ideas.

If the eighth-grade boys who so condescendingly acknowledged the charm of the "kid teacher" and who, at particularly pugilistic recesses in the primary corner of the yard, sometimes noticed Doodle and his cohorts, had ever discovered that Miss Mildred called these same young ideas "honey," ,'darlin'," "kiddies" and such foolishness, Doodle could scarcely have borne his shame. But as long as only the first-graders heard her, it was no matter. As he explained to Dizzy:

"'Course Miss Mildred's no real teacher. She's only a big girl learnin' how. She went to college school up in San Francisco her own self last year. She has beaus! The big fellers saw her automobiling with 'em down the peninsular."

This explanation, Doodle felt, also accounted for those breath-taking moments when Miss Mildred forgot and called him Doodle. The world called him Doodle, but to real teachers he was perennially "Stafford."

February came. The acacia-trees shook out their scented golden scarfs. In the alfalfa-fields south of the schoolhouse, the meadow-larks chattered. And the red-winged blackbirds whistled and swung on the pussy-willows down by the creek, or flashed skyward, adding countless drops of crimson to the bronzes of the setting sun. In Santa Ynez, rafts and stilts went out and agates and kites came in. Also tadpoles in surreptitiously borrowed basins, collections of nut-hatch and finch eggs and "rattler" skins, as an excursion to Doodle's prune drying-house would have proved. The great out-of-doors called alluringly, and truancy sat lightly on the souls in boydom. To teachers and parents it was a nightmare that haunted both sleeping and waking hours.

Miss Mildred alone, but not with forethought, resisted the inroads of the spring madness. Miss Mildred was indeed but a "kid teacher learnin' how," a tenderfoot cavalierly treading the ramifications of boy temperament. Not even when Doodle, Dizzy and other trail-jumping little goatlets kept their monthly appointments to stay after school and help straighten up, did Miss Mildred guess that she was the rallying-point of remarkable fidelity.

Friday, the most heart-breaking of afternoons, was Doodle's. Friday, February fourteenth, while Dizzy, Emil and kindred spirits loudly enjoyed comic valentines under the pepper-trees in the vacant lot, Doodle, his arms filled with erasers and waste-paper, tiptoed about the schoolroom so that Miss Mildred might add "r'ports" undisturbed.

Presently Miss Mildred stood up. The r'ports were finished. "Stafford," she called, "would you mind carrying these pictures to the cabinet for me, dear?"

Ordinarily Doodle despised these pictures, all neatly mounted on olive cardboard, and loathed the uses to which they were put. To-day, however, his glance was caught by the one that topped the stack—that of a bull pup trotting behind a woman and a foolishly decked-out little girl. Doodle regarded the dog with high favor, but the ladies with scorn.

"Don't you like that picture, Stafford?" inquired Miss Mildred.

Doodle took another look, and remarked out of a deep inner knowledge—"The bull pup's all right, but I guess he's lost. I guess he don't belong to that woman or that little girl!"

"But why not, Stafford?"

"Oh, I dunno!" Then in a rare burst of confidence, Doodle added—"Mostly men likes bull pups, an' women likes little dogs with their hair in their eyes."

Miss Mildred stopped dead short in the fluffing of her goldy hair. "Why, Doodle!" she protested. "I love pull pups!"

The last irresistible touch had been added to the perfection of the goddess. For a second, Doodle was motionless through the joyful shock of it. Then, not being able to hide this light on Miss Mildred under a bushel, he rushed wildly from the room. Using his right arm as a steering-wheel and his own ecstatic whoops for a siren, he broke all speed records to the pepper-trees, where he imparted the glorious tidings to his pals.

"'N' the first bull pup that comes to this old town's goin' to be Miss Mildred's," he vowed.

"You bet!" agreed Dizzy. "Emil Cuneo! You gimme my Mutt 'n' Jeff Valentine, or I'll paste you one in the noggin!"

Miss Mildred, on her part, went home that night to entertain a "beau" with the fascinations of one little fiery-headed, speckle-faced, scrubby-featured youngster by the captivating appellation of Doodle.

WITHIN the Santa Ynez schools, coming events cast their shadows before them in the guise of much drilling in the pet hobby of each teacher. Miss Mildred's pet hobby was story-telling around her stack of pictures. She would hold up a print and straightway some young fancy took fire and hung thereby a tale.

Doodle regarded with amazement and open, if quiescent, disbelief, the story-telling adventures of such girls as the Hawaiian Sarah Andina and "the sissies." But when the Latin imagination of Emil Cuneo, whom he had known since creeping days, one day flared up at the sight of a goat and a cart, and he fluently announced:

"Oncet apon a time I had a goat named Michael and I hitched him up and drove to New York and sawr the movies," Doodle had known exactly what to do.

He waited only until he and Emil rounded the school-yard corner to turn on Emil with doubled fists.

"You told Miss Mildred a whopper, 'n' I'm gonta lick the stuffin's out of you for it."

"What y'mean, whopper?" demanded Emil, not delaying until he had the explanation to clench his own fists.

"You know what I mean whopper, good 'n' well! Y' never had a goat in all your born life! 'N' you never went to New York, neither! You never even went to San Francisco but once!"

"Aw!" shamefacedly returned Emil. "I was just makin' up for Miss Mildred like she wants me to. That's her game! She wants you to kid her along like that!"

"You're another!" flamed up Doodle, shaking the red flag of his head. "She tells us ever'body 'spises liars! 'N' they does. 'N' so d'I!"

And Doodle forthwith made good his threat to the best of his rather capable ability. Also to the vast enjoyment of various "big fellers" who stood by.

RUMORS of the affray seeped back to Miss Mildred through the arteries of "girls and sissies." And the next day Miss Mildred had Doodle and Emil up for a conference. By means of their artless answers to her hardly less artless questions she gathered something of Doodle's need for enlightenment on the subject of imagination.

Because Miss Mildred gave it, Doodle lent credence to an explanation of how lies were not always lies, and as the story-telling lessons progressed, day by day, he acquired toleration. But he refused to compete in the story-telling bouts.

At last Miss Mildred hit on a new tack. "But Doodle," she coaxed prettily, again forgetting to be a real teacher and call him Stafford, "you know we're getting ready for the Board of Education. If the board called on you for a story and you couldn't give one because you hadn't practised, just think how badly I'd feel. You wouldn't want to make me ashamed before the board, would you?"

"Naw!" confessed Doodle, slinking farther down into his seat. In Miss Noelke's room he had heard much of the time when the board would swoop down to see if "little girls and boys might pass." But the big fellers had said, "It's not the kids the board comes to pass, IT'S THE TEACHERS!"

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"Well, then, dear," went on Miss Mildred taking advantage of Doodle's reluctance to shame her, "look at this lovely picture and try just once for me."

Thus urged, Doodle unwound his legs from about those of his desk, reluctantly got to his feet, glared at the picture, scratched his ear, scowled once more at the print, and dutifully affirmed: "I see a house, I see a tree. I see some kids." And sat down covered with glory and perspiration.

Recess falling immediately thereafter, Doodle broached to his cronies a subject that lay in his heart. "Say, kids! Miss Mildred's gonta have a birthday first day of May. Heard her tellin' Miss Lapers after school Friday. We oughtta get her sumpin for a present from the room."

"Course we will," Dennis agreed.

"Whut?" queried Emil.

"It might be silver. The fellers in my brother's class got silver for their teacher once. Forks and such," Dennis answered.

"Miss Mildred's present's got to be different. It oughtta be sumpin just for her—sumpin 'live—a guinea pig, mebbe, or a poll parrot, that could talk to her and keep her from bein' lonesome," suggested Dizzy.

Miss Mildred dimpled. "Yes, Doodle?"

DOODLE rose in red excitement. "Or a bull pup!"

"Bull pups cost money," warned Dennis. "'Sides, they's not any round here."

"Miss Mildred's present's got to cost money. You fellows have got to cough up."

"What's your idear, Doodle, about how much we could scrape together?"

"Well, I gotta cent saved from last Friday an' they'll be another to-morrowr. An' I think Ma would give me five cents on a present for Miss Mildred. They's twenty nickels in a dollar, 'n' thirty-one nickels— Oh, heck! If I had the nickels I could count 'em, but I can't count 'em in my head, durn it!"

"Well, I can," asserted Dizzy. "They's two nickels in a dime, and Pa gets a dime ever' time he shaves a man. If he shaves twenty men, he has two dollars, and if he shaves thirty men he gets three dollars and they'd be a nickel besides."

"You may be right, but I got my doubts!" declared Emil. "Anyway, if Doodle gives seven cents we'd have more."

"Well," soothed Doodle, "we'd better wait and see how much we get."

"Some of the cheap guys won't give a thing," averred Dennis. "Betcha Sarah Andivar never sawr five cents of her own."

Doodle rose to the occasion. "The rich ones will have to make up for the poor. My two cents would add up for Sarah, an' Dizzy'll have a dime saved up from two weeks. You oughtta give fifteen cents, Dennis, your Pa keepin' a slaughter-house."

"Them that gives the most's got to be on the committee, Doodle."

"Sure! J'know where we could find a bull pup? They's lots of pups, but they're not bulls."

"I heard Sam Moses tellin' Pa, 'bout a man he takes milk to up Burlingame way, that sent a bull pup to his girl," contributed Emil, "'n' she got mad to him and fired it back. Mebbe he'd sell cheap, if he don't care any more for it than to give it to a girl. And she won't have it, either!"

It had just been agreed that Emil and Dennis should follow up this cue while Doodle and Dizzy collected contributions, when the bell called the boys back into Miss Mildred's room, so further plans were relegated to the free time after school. As soon as they were again seated, Doodle on the small of his back in his lawful seat, Miss Mildred began a story about a great stone face.

Doodle usually found it worth while to listen to Miss Mildred's stories. To-day, however, as soon as he had definitely concluded that whatever it was that wore a stone face looked "sumpin like Miss Noelke" he transferred his attentions to a pop-eyed hop-toad, under an Indian paint brush just outside the window.

Then a fly flipped insolently in. Carefully Doodle stretched a rubber between his thumb and forefinger, rested his wrist on the window and waited. The fly crept nearer, Doodle tauted the rubber and—in walked the "Board Edgecation."

The board was surprisingly young and twinkly-eyed, and his eyes sought out him, Doodle. Doodle promptly turned his on Miss Mildred.

Miss Mildred had finished the great stone face. With cheeks rosier and eyes shinier than usual, and a smile on her lips, she was holding up a picture with the demand that her pupils now tell her a story. Usually there were abundant responses from future romancers in the bud. To-day, however, awed by the board, Miss Mildred's "kids" were going back on her.

Doodle waited and writhed in sympathy for Miss Mildred until he could stand it no longer. He waved a speckled hand in a sun-ray.

Miss Mildred dimpled. "Yes, Doodle?"

There it went again. "Doodle," right before the Board Edgecation, whom he felt sure held, like Miss Noelke, that nicknames were "rude and vulgar." The picture Miss Mildred held up was one of a pup rooting into an upset bottle of milk. It was as plain as the nose on your face that that was all there was to it. But such realism would not do for Miss Mildred before the board.

Doodle dragged himself up by the corner of his desk, stuffed his hands into his pockets, and separated his feet for a firmer basic situation. Then he remembered that this was taboo and took them out and brought them together again. These maneuvers exhausted a few of the slowly ebbing seconds. All the necks in the room were now craned in his direction. Dennis Reagan snickered. The board grinned sympathetically.

"W-oncet upon a time," gasped Doodle. There he stuck. But he puckered his small forehead manfully. "Oh, my Uncle Jim had a bull pup!"

"Yes, dear," said Miss Mildred helpfully. "What was the puppy's name?"

"I fergit."

"Well, let's make up a name," went on Miss Mildred, not noticing the queer noises the board was making in his stomach. "I know a bull pup that's named Prince. How would that do for a name for your Uncle's dog?"

"Aw," returned Doodle, "my Uncle Jim's pup wasn't any boy pup! It was a girl!"

The board turned his back on the room, but Doodle went on. "I 'members now what she was named. It was Spot, 'cause she had a white spot on her ear."

"That's fine," said Miss Mildred. "And what did Spot do?"

"She had pups," replied Doodle.

DAY by day the money for Miss Mildred's present dribbled in, in sums from one cent to twenty-three, from a Crœsus whom Doodle had to thrash before he could collect according to promise. In the meantime there had been rumors that it made no difference whether the board passed Miss Mildred or not. She was going to get married to a man up in San Francisco, who had a place in Burlingame, and who "was just crazy about her." Doodle, Dizzy, Emil and Dennis felt rather limp over the news.

"Aw! what do we care!" Emil finally said. "We can't have her no more. We'll be second-graders."

Doodle glowered at him. "They'se other kids!"

"Well, we can't help it anyway. That's the way women allus does," philosophized

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Dennis, who had been two terms in the high first and was wise in the ways of the world. "Mebbe we'd better give her the pup for a goin'-away present. The kids is all paid up. Come on! Le's go up behind the prune-house and count it up."

So with the money in a tobacco-sack, the four committeemen retired behind the dry house and plunged into high finance.

So expeditiously did Dizzy handle the dimes that Dennis soon chalked up seventy cents on the back of the shed. Twenty five-cent pieces were also soon returned to the tobacco-sack and marked down under the seventy cents. But there remained eight distracting nickels.

"You count by fives," asserted Emil, "like Miss Mildred learned us. I holds a nickel 'n' says five, 'n' Dizzy holds two nickels and says ten, an' Dennis holds three nickels and says—why he says——"

"Aw, you don't do nothin' of the kin'," Dennis told him. "Miss Mildred never gave us but one paper nickel apiece. You just holds one nickel 'n' says five, an' I holds just one nickel 'n' says ten, an' Doodle holds just one nickel 'n' says fifteen, and Emil holds just one nickel 'n' says twenty. Then we lays them down and starts all over again."

"Naw, you don't! You wouldn't get nowhere if you began all over," objected Doodle. "You lays 'em down but you keeps 'em in your head, and Dizzy picks up another 'n' says twenty-five."

"That's right! That's the idear!" agreed Dennis. "You've gotta swell head for figures, Doodle! Now, I picks up another 'n' says twenty-six."

"It makes more'n twenty-six," Dizzy maintained. "If you picked up a copper, you'd have twenty-six, but if you picked up a five, you'd have——"

"Thirty!" screamed Doodle, living up to his newly acquired reputation. "And now I picks up another an' says thirty-five, 'n' Bud picks up another 'n' says forty, an' that's all. Chalk up forty cents more, Dennis."

Next they counted twenty-three pennies, which were also written down. Then all turned and stared blankly at the wall cash ledger which read:

"Seventy sents
"A doler
"Fourty sents more
"Twenty-three coppers."

For the interminable space of five minutes, four small boys stood before this illuminating account, wordlessly stuffing their hands into their pockets and taking them out again. In awkward silence they stood and gazed until Doodle suggested: "Tell you what let's do, let's take it down to the grocery and get Gus Bonzani to count it for us."

Accordingly it was done, and that night the four boys went home tingling with the satisfaction of two dollars and thirty-three cents to offer the owner of a bull pup, who lived "a mile off the county road at Burlingame, on the street that runs clear to the bay." They also held a promise from Sam Moses, the dairyman, to give them a ride that far, if they would be at his barn at seven o'clock the next morning.

E. R. HARRISON, San Francisco clubman, and well-known Burlingame dog-fancier, leaned on the gate inside of his kennel grounds, at the top of a hill, and gloomily contemplated a five-hundred-dollar bull pup that raced awkwardly back and forth from his thousand-dollar mother to his multi-millionaire master.

The early June sunshine fell in golden shafts through the cathedral aisles of the eucalyptus and merrily danced on the waters of his own private lake. To his left lay the lustrous green enchantment of San Francisco Bay, and on his right the green embroidery of the redwoods was etched against a cloudless sky. But today E. R. Harrison counted all these as nothing, for he had quarreled with the one girl in the world.

In a new access of joy, the pup dashed once more away from his mother. Meeting with the hard resistance of his master's boots, he fell with an aristocratically heavy thump at that master's feet. He snorted comically through the black stump of his nose, picked himself up, uncurled his upper lip from between his incisors, revealing the more retiring teeth of his set, and barked threateningly.

The master, aroused, stared disconsolately at him. "Oh, boy!" he ruminated aloud, "where could you find a surlier mouth than that, or a pair of legs better spread? And to think she sent you back! Actually chucked you into a box and flung you back by a common Jap house boy."

The pup leaped on the gray-clad legs once more and barked in full-blooded agreement.

"The ring I could have overlooked," went on the man. "Anybody can buy a ring. But a blooded, English bull! And all because I—why naturally, when a fellow's engaged to a girl——"

"Mister, are you the man that's got a bull pup?"

E. R. Harrison turned toward the shrill pipe and gazed in amazement at four very hot, very dusty gnomes, who, as is the custom of their genus, evidently rose out of the ground. In their turn, Doodle, Dizzy, Emil and Dennis stared in consternation at the Board Edgecation.

"Hello, tads and shavers!" said the board, recovering first. "Want to see the dogs?" He opened the gate and cordially waved them in.

The pup, having sniffed a time or two through the jetty holes that served him as nostrils, leaped impetuously through Doodle's spraddled legs, forcing him into a backward somersault.

The host hastened to set Doodle on his feet again. "Pardon us, Julius Cæsar." He made a facetious pass at Doodle's luminous poll. "No offense; we may be a bit rough, but our intentions are of the best. It's a way we have of showing friendship. Sudden, but ardent, you know."

Doodle ducked bashfully away from the hand. "S'all right." He squinted anxiously up the full height of the giant beside him. "Want to sell 'im?"

Something between a grunt and a laugh shook the entire six feet of gray-tweed figure. "Were you thinking of buying?"

The pup, after his first essay at sociability, had retired to his mother. He now snorted again, rushed toward Doodle, unexpectedly halted with a quick dig of his feet in the sod, and stood wagging his whole splendidly brindled body at the boy. Such an ugly, spraddle-legged, scraggly toothed, hare-lipped, noseless pup would have delighted the heart of any man, not to speak of the sturdy beginning of one like Doodle. The boy crumpled down and put his arms about as much of that stumpy body as he could, while the pup poked an inquisitive nose under his chin.

"Don't, you durn fool!" Doodle giggled, "you tickle." Then Doodle lifted his glowing eyes to the owner. "Will you sell him to us?"

"About how much would you be willing to give?" inquired the board, grinning.

With the pup in his arms, Doodle almost forgot to jew, but Dizzy stood by their contract. "We'll give you a dollar fifty," he announced with a lordly wave of the jingly tobacco-sack.

"Spot cash," added Dennis.

The Board Edgecation threw back his head and laughed boyishly.

"It's for the schools. Ever'body sells cheap to the schools," urged Emil.

The board looked blank for a moment. "Schools is it?" he cried, then added with a sly look: "You young pea-shooters,

"Mister, are you the man that's got a bull pup?"

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you! In my day the pup that dast to come to school would have had his jacket well tanned!"

"Honest injun, mister," spoke up Doodle, "it's for a present for Miss Mildred."

"Give you one six bits," bargained Dizzy, his mind still on the rising market.

The dog-owner sat down hastily on a bench. "Miss Mildred! Do you youngsters go to the Santa Ynez school?"

"Yep!"

"Is your teacher Miss Mildred Bennet?"

"Sure! And she's a Jim dandy, but she's gonta get married to a city feller, 'n' we wantta give her a present before she goes," confided Emil.

The man stared down at Doodle with a mixed expression. "Durn me, if you aren't that little red-headed shaver that told the bull-pup story!" Something shamefacedly sentimental sneaked into his open countenance. He reached out and gave Doodle's flaming head a gentle pat, then punched him in the stomach. "Hey, you rogues, you are trying to jew me down. How much have you got?"

"Two thirty-three," confessed Doodle. "Honest, that's all. You can search for yourself. Will you let us have the pup?"

The board looked from one anxious face to the other and smiled rather foolishly. "Wait a minute, till I do a little figuring of my own. You young fellows fresh from school are too quick for an old duffer like me." So saying, the board leaned both elbows on the gate and turned his back.

After a silence he faced about.

"Tell you what I'll do," he said. "I'll let you have the pup and a collar, with Miss Mildred's initials on it, if after, mind you I said *after*, you've put the pup in her arms and he's nosed her, and that, you know, you tell her there's a note under the collar for her. Pretend it's from you youngsters, see?—until she reads it."

"Done," said Dennis.

And "Done!" echoed Dizzy and Emil. But Doodle, with the bull pup sending mad ripples of joy up and down his wiry little body, could only dumbly motion to Dizzy to pass over the money-bag.

So presently with a highly scented, lumpy tobacco-sack in his hand, the millionaire owner of a prize bull pup hopefully watched out of sight a long gray car. Beside the figure of his kennel man on the back seat bobbed four bullet-shaped heads, ranging from black through brown and red to white, while down the highway drifted a series of short, throaty, belligerent barks.

The barks, although the master could not hear them, echoed intermittently through the half-hour that it took the machine to travel from Burlingame to the Santa Ynez schoolhouse. There the man muzzled him with a firm hand and followed the four boys to the door of the overflow room. Then he wrapped Doodle's arms firmly about the dog, turned the doorknob and shoved the boys into the room.

At that opportune moment Miss Mildred was sitting with her back to the door, trying to draw from a perspiring crony of Emil's the cause for the simultaneous absence of four erstwhile punctually regular pupils. Doodle marched straight up to her and dumped his armful into her lap. "For you from all us kids," he announced.

Then a strange thing happened. The pup, which all along had strenuously objected to laps, suddenly began to bark joyously, to leap up with his forepaws on Miss Mildred's shoulder and to extend familiar greetings with an impetuous red tongue. Miss Mildred gathered him up in her arms, crying, "Prince! oh, Prince!" and hugged him till he yelped.

"For you from all us kids," reiterated Doodle.

"We went all the way to Burlingame and bought him," contributed Emil.

"For two dollars and thirty-three cents," exclaimed Dizzy.

"And a note under the collar for you," added the faithful Doodle.

On the back seat bobbed four bullet-shaped heads, while down the highway drifted a series of short, throaty, belligerent barks.

"A note!" exclaimed Miss Mildred, alternately flushing and paling. Slowly she reached under the collar and slowly unfolded the note. Doodle felt that it took her quite a while to read that one page; but suddenly Miss Mildred's arms closed about the pup once more. She sat for a long moment with her face hidden against his glossy coat; then she stood up and gathered the four emissaries into her arms.

IT WAS the afternoon of Miss Mildred's June wedding at which Doodle, Dennis, Dizzy and Emil, under the guardianship of Miss Lapers, represented the school. Dizzy's mind was still on the glad face of Miss Mildred as she went away in the machine with the bull-pup man, who after all was not the Board of Edgecation.

"Doodle," he inquired, rather low for a small boy, "do you 'spose Miss Mildred will think more of *him* than she does of the bull pup?"

Doodle flipped a rock at an I. W. W. crow on the telephone wire, and his physical eye followed the blatant flight of the vagabond. But his inner vision was on a memory of Miss Mildred, all rosy and shiny-eyed, with her arms about a wagging, brindled stump of a dog, whose black nose was in the alluring curve of her white throat.

"N-a-aw!" said Doodle.

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Hidden Creek

By Katharine Newlin Burt

Author of "The Branding-Iron"

CHAPTER FIVE (Continued)

SHEILA had not before quite realized his good looks. Now all his lithe long gracefulness was painted for her against a square of purple night. The clean white silk shirt fitted his broad shoulders, the wide rider's belt clung to his supple waist, the leather chaps were shaped to his Greek hips and thighs. No civilized man's costume could so have revealed and enhanced his beautiful strength. And above the long body his face glowed with its vivid coloring, the liquid golden eyes that moved easily under their lids, the polished black hair sleekly brushed, the red-brown cheeks, the bright lips, flexible and curved, of his Spanish mother.

"Who in God's name are you?" demanded Miss Blake in her deepest voice.

"This is Mr. Hilliard," Sheila came forward. "He is the man that brought me over the hill, Miss Blake, after I'd lost my horse, you know." There was some urgency in Sheila's tone, a sort of prod to courtesy. Miss Blake settled back on her spine and recrossed her legs.

"Well, come in," she said, "and shut the door. No use frosting us all, is there?" She resumed her spectacles and her reading of the *Popular Science Monthly*.

Hilliard, still smiling, bowed to her, took Sheila's hand for an instant, then moved easily across the room and settled on his heels at one corner of the hearth. He had been riding, it would seem, in the thin silk shirt and had found the night air crisp. He rolled a cigaret with the hands that had first drawn Sheila's notice as they held his glass on the bar; gentleman's hands, clever, sensitive, carefully kept. From his occupation, he looked up at Miss Blake audaciously.

"You'd better make friends with me, ma'am," he said, "because we're going to be neighbors."

"How's that?"

"I'm taking up my homestead right down here below you on Hidden Creek a-ways. About six miles below your ford."

Miss Blake's face filled with dark blood. She said nothing, put up her magazine.

Sheila, however, exclaimed delightedly, "Taken up a homestead?"

"Yes, ma'am." He turned his floating, glowing look to her and there it stayed almost without deviation during the rest of his visit. "I've built me a log house, a dandy. I had a man up from Rusty to help me. I've bought me a cow. I'm getting my furnishings ready. That's what I've been doing these two months."

"And never rode up to call on us?" Sheila reproached him.

"No, ma'am. I'll tell you the reason for that. I wasn't sure of myself." She opened rather puzzled and astonished eyes at this, but for an instant his look went beyond her and remembered troubling things. "You see, Miss Arundel, I'm not used to settling down. That's something that I've had no practise in. I'm impatient. I get tired quickly. Damn quickly. I change my mind. It's the worst thing in me—a sort of devil-horse always thirsty for new things. It's touch and go with him. He runs with me. You see, I've always given him his head." His look had come back to her face and dwelt there, speaking for him a language headier than that of his tongue.

"I thought I'd tie the dern fool down to some good tough work and test him out. Well, ma'am, he hasn't quit on me this time. I think he won't. I've got a ball and chain round about that cloven foot." He drew at his cigaret, half veiling in smoke the ardor of his look. "I'd like to show you my house, Miss Arundel. It's fine. I worked with a builder one season when I was a lad. I've got it peeled inside. The logs shine, and I've got a fireplace twice the size of this in my living-room." He made graceful gestures with the hand that held the cigaret. "Yes, ma'am, a living-room, and a kitchen and—" with a whimsical smile—"a butler's pantry. And oh, a great big bedroom that gets the morning sun." He paused an instant and flushed from chin to brow, an Anglo-Saxon flush it was, but the bold Latin eyes did not fall. "I've made some furnishings already. And I've sent out an order for kitchen stuff."

V

THE STORY

SHEILA ARUNDEL, a seventeen-year-old, elf-like, elusive creature, is left by the death of her artist father alone in the world. Sylvester Hudson, owner of a chain of rather disreputable hotels in the West, has bought a picture from Arundel, and calls for it the day after the artist's death. He takes Sheila with him to his home in Millings, ostensibly to help his wife and daughters with the housework.

Hudson's son Dickie, clerk in the Aura Hotel, is an habitual drunkard, but sweet-natured and gentle, with a love of beauty and a poetic sense which his father vainly tries to suppress. He is greatly attracted by Sheila, and, although forbidden by Hudson to see her, determines to stand by her in case—as he thinks likely—she may need a friend. Mrs. Hudson is jealous of her husband's interest in Sheila, and insults her. Hudson persuades her to leave his home and to become barmaid in the Aura. He urges that she can, in this way, exert a wonderful influence for good over the town.

Here Sheila meets Cosme Hilliard, a handsome reckless cowboy, whose life she saves in a drunken brawl in the saloon. She also meets Christina Blake, a middle aged, masculine woman, who lives alone near Hilliard at Hidden Creek, and who offers her a home, should she wish to leave the Aura.

Sheila does not understand that gossip is centering about Hudson and herself but realizes that she is frowned upon by her former friends. She finally forces Dickie to an explanation of her position. Dickie asks her to marry him. She refuses. Hudson, entering at the time, misunderstands the situation. He strikes Dickie and orders Sheila out of Millings, telling her that he considers her no longer "good enough" to act as "beacon light" in the Aura bar.

Dickie, unable to find Sheila, goes to New York, lives at her old home and secures a position in a restaurant, hoping that she will return. But Sheila has joined Miss Blake in her wild and lonely camp at Hidden Creek. On the way she meets Hilliard again, and after her arrival at Miss Blake's he comes to see her.

Here Miss Blake changed the crossing of her legs.

Sheila was angry with herself because she was consumed with the contagion of his blush. She wished that he would not look as if he had seen the blush and was pleased by it. She wished that his clean young strength and beauty and the ardor of his eyes did not speak quite so eloquently.

"I bought a little black horse about so high"—he held his hand an absurd distance from the floor and laughed—"just the size for a little girl and—do you know who I'm going to give him to?"

Here Miss Blake got up, strode to the pianola, adjusted it and sat down, broad and solid and unabashed by absence of feminine draperies, upon the stool. She played a comic song.

"I don't like your *family*—" in some such dreadful way it expressed itself,

> "They do *not* look good to me.
> I don't think your *Uncle* John
> Ever *had* a collar on——"

She played it very loud.

Hilliard stood up and came close to Sheila.

"She's mad as a March hare," he whispered, "and she doesn't like me a little bit. Come out while I catch up Dusty, won't you, please? It's moonlight. I'll be going." He repeated this very loud for Miss Blake's benefit with no apparent effect upon her enjoyment of the song. She was rocking to its rhythm. Hilliard was overwhelmed suddenly by the appearance of her. He put his hand to his mouth, and bolted. Sheila, following, found him around the corner of the house rocking and gasping with mirth. He looked at her through tears.

"PUSS in Boots," he gasped, and Sheila ran to the edge of the clearing to be safe in a mighty self-indulgence. There they crouched like two children till their laughter spent itself. Hilliard was serious first.

"You're a bad, ungrateful girl," he said weakly, "to laugh at a sweet old lady like that."

"Oh, I am." Sheila took it almost seriously. "She's been wonderful to me."

"I bet she works you," he said jealously.

"Oh, no. Not a bit too hard. I love it."

"Well," he admitted, "you do look pretty fine, that's a fact. Better than you did at Hudson's. What did you quit for?"

Sheila was sober enough now. The moonlight let some of its silver, uncaught by the twinkling aspen leaves, splash down on her face. It seemed to flicker and quiver like the leaves. She shook her head.

He looked a trifle sullen. "Oh, you won't tell me. Funny idea, you being a barmaid. Hudson's notion, wasn't it?"

Sheila lifted her clear eyes. "I thought asking questions wasn't good manners in the West."

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"Damn!" he said. "Don't you make me angry. I've got a right to ask you questions."

She put her hand up against the smooth white trunk of the tree near which she stood. She seemed to grow a little taller.

"Oh, have you? I don't think I quite understand how you got any such right. And you like to be questioned yourself?"

She had him there, had him rather cruelly, though he was not aware of the weapon of her suspicion. She felt a little ashamed when she saw him wince. He slapped his gloves against his leather chaps, looking at her with hot, sulky eyes.

"Oh, well! I beg your pardon. Listen!" He flung his ill-humor aside and was sweet and cool again like the night. "Are you going to take the little horse?"

"I don't know."

His face shadowed and fell so expressively, so utterly, that she melted.

"Oh," he stammered, half-turning from her, "I was sure. I brought him up."

This completed the melting process. "Of course I'll take him," she cried. "Where is he?"

She inspected the beautiful little animal by the moonlight. She even let Hilliard mount her on the shining glossy back and rode slowly about, clinging to his mane, ecstatic over the rippling movement under her.

"He's like a rocking-chair," said Cosme. "You can ride him all day and not feel it." He looked about the silver meadow. "Good feed here, isn't there? I bet he'll stay. If not, I'll get him for you."

Sheila slipped down. They left the horse to graze.

"Yes, it's first-rate feed. Do you think Miss Blake will let me keep him?"

His answer was entirely lost by a sudden outbreak from the dogs.

"Good Lord!" said Cosme, making himself heard. "What a breed! Isn't that awful? Why does she keep the brutes? Isn't she scared they'll eat her?

Sheila shook her head. Presently the tumult quieted down.

"They're afraid of her," she said. "She has a dreadful whip. She likes to bully them. I think she's rather cruel. But she does love Berg. She says he's the only real dog in the pack."

"WAS Berg the one on the bear-skin inside?"

"Yes."

"He's sure a beauty. But I don't like him. He has wolf eyes. See here—you're shivering. I've kept you out here in the cold. I'll go. Good-night. Thank you for keeping the horse. Will you come down to see my house? I built it—" he drawled the words, "for you—" and added after a tingling moment, "—to see, ma'am."

This experiment in words sent Sheila to the house, her hand crushed and aching with his good-by grasp, her heart jumping with a queer fright.

Miss Blake stood astraddle on the hearth, her hands behind her back.

"You better go to bed, Sheila," she said, "it's eleven o'clock and to-morrow's washday."

Her voice was pleasant enough, but its bluffness had a new edge. Sheila found it easy to obey. She climbed up the ladder to the little gabled loft which was her bedroom. Half-way up she paused to assert a belated independence of spirit. "Good-night," she said. "How do you like our neighbor?"

Miss Blake stared up. Her lips were set tight. She made no answer. After an instant she sauntered across the room and out of the door. The whip with which she beat the dogs swung in her hand. A moment later a fearful howling and yelping showed that some culprit had been chosen for condign punishment.

Sheila set down her candle, sat on the edge of her cot, and covered her ears with her hands. When it was over, she crept into bed. She felt, though she chided herself for the absurdity, like a naughty child who has been forcibly reminded of the consequences of rebellion.

CHAPTER SIX

A History and a Letter

THE next morning, it seemed that Miss Blake's humor had completely changed. It showed something like an apologetic softness. She patted Sheila's shoulder when she passed the girl at work. When Hilliard next appeared, a morning visit this time, he was bidden to share their dinner, he was even smiled upon.

"She's not such a bad old girl, is she?" he admitted when Sheila had been given a half-holiday and was riding on the black horse beside Hilliard on his Dusty across one of the mountain meadows.

"*I* think she's a dear," said Sheila, pink with gratitude, then shadowing, "If only she wouldn't beat the dogs, and would give up trapping."

"Why in thunder shouldn't she trap?"

"I loathe trapping. Do you remember how you felt in the pen? It's bad enough to shoot down splendid wild things for food, but, to trap them—small furry things or even big furry things like bears, why, it's cruel. It's hideously cruel. When a woman does it——"

"Come now, don't call *her* a woman!"

"Yes. She is. Think of the aprons! And she is so tidy."

"That's not just a woman's virtue."

"Maybe not. I'm not sure. But I've a feeling that it was Eve who first discovered dust."

"Very bad job if she did. Think of all the bother we've been going through ever since."

"There!" Sheila triumphed. "To you it's just bother. You're a man. To me it's a form of sport —— I wonder what Miss Blake's story is."

"You mean—?" He turned in his saddle to stare wonderingly at her. "You don't know?"

"No." Sheila blushed confusedly, "I—I don't know anything about her—"

"Good Lord!" He whistled softly. "Sometimes those ventures turn out all right." He looked dubious. "I'm glad I'm here!"

Sheila's smile slipped sweetly across her mouth and eyes. "So am I. But," she added after a thoughtful moment, "I don't know much about your story either, do I?"

"I might say something about asking questions," began Cosme with grimness, but changed his tone quickly with a light apologetic touch on her arm, "but—but I won't. I ran away from school when I was fourteen and I've been knocking around the West ever since."

"What school?" asked Sheila.

He did not answer for several minutes. They had come to the end of the meadow, and were mounting a slope on a narrow trail where the ponies seemed to nose their way among the trees. Now and then Sheila had to put out her hand to push her knee away from a threatening trunk. Below were the vivid paintbrush flowers and the blue mountain lupine, and all about the nymph-white aspens with leaves turning to restless gold against the sky. The horses moved quietly with a slight creaking of saddles. There was a feeling of stealth, of mystery—that tiptoe breathless expectation of Pan-pipes—— At last Cosme turned in his saddle, rested his hand on the cantle and looked at Sheila from a bent face with troubled eyes.

"It was an Eastern school," he said. "No doubt you've heard of it. It was Groton."

The name here in these Wyoming woods brought a picture as foreign as the artificiality of a drawing-room.

"Groton? You ran away?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Sheila's suspicions were returning forcibly. "I'll have to ask questions, Mr. Hilliard, because it seems so strange—what you are now, and your running away and never having been brought back to the East by—by whoever it was that sent you to Groton."

"I want you to ask questions," he said rather wistfully. "You have the right."

This forced her into something of a dilemma. She ignored it and waited, looking away from him. He would not leave her this loophole, however.

"Why don't you look at me?" he demanded crossly.

She did, and smiled again.

"You have the prettiest smile I ever saw!" he cried, then went on quickly—"I ran away because of something that happened. I'll tell you. My mother—" he flushed and his eyes fell—"came up to see me at school one day. My mother was very beautiful—— I was mad about her."

CURIOUSLY enough, every trace of the Western cowboy had gone out of his voice and manner, which were an echo of the voice and manner of the Groton schoolboy whose experience he told. "I was proud of her—you know how a kid is. I kind of paraded her round and showed her off to the other fellows. No other fellow had such a beautiful mother. Then as we were saying good-by, a crowd of the boys all round, I did something—trod on her foot or something, I don't quite know what—and she lifted up her hand and slapped me across the face." He was white at the shocking memory. "Right there before them all, when I—I was adoring her. She had the temper of a devil, a sudden, Spanish, temper, the kind I have too—and she never made the slightest effort to hold it down. She hit me and she laughed as though it was funny and she got into her carriage. I cut off to my vehicle. I wanted to kill myself. I couldn't face any one. I wanted never to see her again. I guess I was a queer sort of kid—— I don't know——" He drew a big breath, dropped back to the present, and his vivid color returned. "That's why I ran away from school, Miss Arundel."

"And they never brought you back?"

He laughed. "They never found me. I had quite a lot of money and I lost myself

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pretty cleverly—— a boy of fourteen can, you know. It's a very common history. Well, I suppose they didn't break their necks over me either, after the first panic. They were busy people—my parents—remarkably busy going to the devil. ——And they were eternally hard-up. You see, my grandfather had the money—still has it—and he's remarkably tight. I wrote to them after six years, when I was twenty. They wrote back, at least their lawyer did. They tried—not very sincerely though, I think—to coax me East again—— Told me they'd double my allowance if I did—they've sent me a pittance—" He shuddered suddenly, a violent primitive shiver, "I'm glad I didn't go," he said.

There was a long stillness. That dreadful climax to the special "business" of the Hilliards was relived in both their memories. But it was something of which neither could speak. Sheila wondered if the beautiful mother was that instant wearing the hideous prison dress. She wished that she had read the result of the trial. She wouldn't for the world question this pale and silent young man. The rest of their ride was quiet and rather mournful. They rode back at sunset and Hilliard bade her a troubled good-by.

She wanted to say something comforting, reassuring. She watched him helplessly from where she stood on the porch, as he walked across the clearing to his horse. Suddenly he slapped the pocket of his chaps and turned back. "Thunder!" he cried, "I'd forgotten the mail. A fellow left it at the ford. A paper for Miss Blake and a letter for you."

SHEILA held out her hand. "A letter for me?" She took it. It was a strange hand, small and rather unsteady. The envelope was fat, the postmark, Millings. Her flush of surprise ebbed. She knew whose letter it was—Sylvester Hudson's. He had found her out.

She did not even notice Cosme's departure. She went up to her loft, sat down on her cot and read.

My dear Miss Sheila:

I don't rightly know how to express myself in this letter because I know what your feelings towards Pap must be like and they are fierce. But I have got to try to write you a letter just the same, for there are some things that need explaining. At first, when my hotel and my Aura were burned down—" here the writing was especially shaky—" and I found that you and Dickie had both vamoosed, I thought that you had paid me out and gone off together. You can't blame me for that thought, Miss Sheila, for I had found him in your room at that time of night or morning, and I couldn't help but see that he was aiming to kiss you and you were waiting for his kiss. So I was angry and I had been drinking and I kissed you myself, taking advantage of you in a way that no gentleman would do. But I thought you were different from the Sheila I had brought to be my barmaid.

Well, ma'am, for a while after the fire I was pretty near crazy. I was about loco. Then I was sick. When I got well again, a fellow who come over from Hidden Creek told me you had gone over to be at a ranch there, and that you had come in alone. That sort of got me to thinking about you more and more and studying you out, and I begun to see that I had made a bad mistake. Whatsoever reason brought that damn-fool Dickie to your room that morning, it wasn't your doings, and the way you was waiting for his kiss was more a mother's way.

I have had some hard moments with myself, Miss Sheila, and I have come to this, that I got to write and tell you how I feel. And ask your forgiveness. You see you were something in my life different from anything that had ever been there. I don't rightly know—I likely never will know—what you meant in my life. I handled you in my heart like a flower. Before God, I had a religion for you. And that was just why, when I thought you was bad that it drove me crazy. I wonder if you will understand this. You are awful young and awful ignorant. And I have hurt your pride. You are terrible proud for your years, Miss Sheila. I ache all over when I think that I hurt your pretty mouth. I hope it is smiling now.

I am moving out of Millings—me and Momma and Babe. But Girlie is a-going to marry Jim. He run right back to her like a little lost lamb the second you was gone. Likely he'll never touch liquor again. I haven't heard from Dickie. I guess he's gone where the saloons are bigger and where you can get oysters with your drinks. He always was a damn fool.

I would dearly like to go over to Hidden Creek and see you but I feel like I'd better not. It would hurt me if I got a turn-down from you like it will hurt me if you don't answer this letter, which is a mighty poor attempt to tell you my bad reasons for behaving like I did.

I am not sorry I thrashed Dickie. He had ought to be thrashed good and plenty. And he has sure paid me off by burning down my Aura. That was a saloon in a million, Miss Sheila, and the picture of you standing there back of my bar, looking so dainty and sweet and fine in your black dress and your frills—well, ma'am, I'll sure try to be thinking of that when I cash in.

Well, Miss Sheila, I wish you good fortune in whatever you do and I hope that if you ever need a friend you will overlook my bad break and remember the artist that tried to put you in his big work and—failed.

This extraordinary document was signed —"Sylvester." Sheila was left bewildered with strange tears in her throat.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sanctuary

THERE came to the restaurant where Dickie worked a certain sallow and irritable man, no longer in his early youth. He came daily for one of his three meals; it might be lunch or dinner or even breakfast. Dickie was always in haste to serve him. For some reason, the man's clever and nervous personality intrigued his interest. And this although his customer never threw him a glance, scowled at a newspaper, barked out an order, gulped his food, stuck a fair-sized tip under the edge of his plate and jerked himself away.

On a certain sluggish noon-hour in August, Dickie, as far as the kitchen door with a tray balanced on his palm, realized that he had forgotten this man's order. He hesitated to go back. "Like as not," reasoned Dickie, "he didn't rightly know what the order was. He never does look at his food. I'll fetch him a Spanish omelet and a salad and a glass of iced tea. It's a whole lot better order than he'd have thought of himself."

Nevertheless, it was with some trepidation that he set the omelet down before that lined and averted countenance. Its owner was screwed into his chair as usual, eyes with a sharp cleft between their brows bent on his folded newspaper, and he put his right hand blindly on the fork. But as it pricked the contents of the plate a savory fragrance rose and the reader looked.

"Here, you damn fool, that's not my order," he snapped out.

Dickie tasted a homely memory—"Dickie, damn-fool." He stood silent a moment, looking down with one of his quaint impersonal looks.

"Well, sir," then he said slowly, "it ain't your order, but you look a whole lot more like a feller that would order Spanish omelet than like a feller that would order Hamburger steak."

FOR the first time the man turned about, flung his arm over his chair-back, and looked up at Dickie. In fact, he stared His thin lips enclosed in an ill-tempered parenthesis of double lines twisted themselves slightly.

"I'll be derned!" he said. "But look here, my man, I didn't order Hamburger steak; I ordered chicken."

Dickie deliberately smoothed down the cowlick on his head. He wore his look of a seven-year-old with which he was wont to face the extremity of Sylvester's exasperation.

"I reckon I clean forgot your order, sir," he said. "I figured out that you wouldn't be caring what was on your plate. This heat," he added, "sure puts a blinder on a fellow's memory."

The man laughed shortly. "It's all right," he said. "This'll go down."

He ate in silence. Then he glanced up again. "What are you waiting for, anyway?"

Dickie flushed faintly. "I was sort of wishful to see how it would go down."

"Oh, I don't mean that kind of waiting. I mean—why are you a waiter in this—hash-hole?"

Dickie meditated. "There ain't no answer to that," he said. "I don't know why." He added, "—why anything. It's a sort of extry word in the dictionary—don't mean much, anyway you look at it."

He gathered up the dishes. The man watched him, tilting back a little in his chair, his eyes twinkling under brows drawn together. A moment afterward he left the restaurant.

It was several nights later when Dickie saw him again—or rather when Dickie was again seen by him. This time Dickie was not in the restaurant. He was at a table in a small free library near Greenwich Avenue, and he was copying painstakingly with one hand from a fat volume which he held down with the other. The strong heavily shaded light made a circle of brilliance about him; his fair hair shone silvery bright, his face had a sort of seraphic pallor. The orderer of chicken, striding away from the desk with a hastily obtained book of reference, stopped short and stared at him, then came close and touched the thin shiny shoulder of the blue serge coat.

"This the way you take your pleasure?" he asked abruptly.

Dickie looked up slowly, and his consciousness seemed to travel even more slowly back from the fairy doings of a midsummer night. Under the observant eyes bent upon it, his face changed extraordinarily from the face of untroubled, almost immortal childhood to the face of struggling and reserved manhood.

"Hullo," he said with a smile of recognition. "Well, yes—not always."

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"I'm taking up my homestead right down here below you on Hidden Creek a-ways. About six miles below your ford."

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"What are you reading?" The man slipped into the chair beside Dickie, put on his glasses and looked at the fat book. "Poetry! Hump! What are you copying it for? Letter to your girl?"

Dickie had all the Westerner's prejudice against questions, but he felt drawn to this patron of the "hash-hole," so, though he drawled his answer slightly, it was an honest answer.

"It ain't my book," he said, "that's why I'm copying it."

"Why in thunder don't you take it out, you young idiot?"

Dickie colored. "Well, sir, I don't rightly understand the workings of this place. I come by it on the way home and I kep' a-seeing folks goin' in with books and comin' out with books. I figured it was a kind of exchange proposition. I've only got one book—and that ain't rightly mine—" the man looking at him wondered why his face flamed— "so when I came in I just watched, and I figured you could read here if you had the notion to take down a book and fetch it over to the table and copy from it and return it. So I've been doing that."

"Why didn't you go to the desk, youngster, and ask questions?"

"Where I come from—"Dickie was drawling again—"folks don't deal so much in questions as they do here."

"Where you came from! You came from Mars. Come along to the desk and I'll fix you up with a card and you can take an armful of poetry home with you."

Dickie went to the desk and signed his name. The stranger signed his—Augustus Lorrimer. The librarian stamped a bit of cardboard and stuck it into the fat volume. She handed it to Dickie wearily.

"Thank *you*, ma'am," he said with such respectful fervor that she looked up at him and smiled.

"Now where's your diggings?" asked Lorrimer, who had taken no hints about asking questions, East or West. He was a newspaper reporter.

"Would you be caring to walk home with me?" asked Dickie. There was a great deal of dignity in his tone, more in his carriage.

"Yes, I'd 'be caring to'! Lead on, Martian!" And Lorrimer felt after he'd said that, that he was a vulgarian—a long-forgotten sensation. "In Mars," he commented to himself, "this young man was some kind of a prince."

"What do you look over your shoulder that way for, Dick?" he asked aloud a few blocks on their way. "Scared the police will take away your book?"

DICKIE blinked at him with a startled air. "Did I? I guess a fellow gets into queer ways when he's alone a whole lot. I get kind of feeling like somebody was following me in this town; so many folks going to and fro does it to me, most likely."

"Yes, a fellow does get into queer ways when he's alone a whole lot," said Lorrimer slowly. His mind went back a dozen years to his own first winter in New York. He looked with keenness at Dickie's face. It was a curiously charming face, he thought, but it was tight-knit with a harried, struggling sort of look, and this in spite of its quaint detachment.

"Know any one in this city?"

"No, sir, not rightly. I've made acquaintance with some of the waiters. They've asked me to join a club. But I haven't got the cash."

"What pay do you draw?"

Dickie named a sum.

"Not much, eh? But you've got your tips."

"Yes, sir. I pay my rent with my pay and live on the tips."

"Must be uncertain kind of living! Where do you live, anyway? What? Here?"

They had crossed Washington Square and were entering a tall studio building to the south and east. Dickie climbed lightly up the stairs. Lorrimer followed with a feeling of bewilderment. On the top landing, dimly lighted, Dickie unlocked a door and stood aside.

"Just step in and look up," he said, "afore I light the light. You'll see something."

Lorrimer obeyed. A swarm of golden bees glimmered before his eyes.

"Stars," said Dickie. "Down below you wouldn't hardly know you had 'em, would you?"

Lorrimer did not answer. A moment later an asthmatic gas-jet caught its breath and he saw a bare studio room almost vacant of furniture. There was a bed and a screen and a few chairs, one window facing an alley wall. The stars had vanished.

"Pretty palatial quarters for a fellow on your job," Lorrimer remarked. "How did you happen to get here?"

"SOME—people I knowed of once lived here." Dickie's voice had taken on a certain remoteness, and even Lorrimer knew that here questions stopped. He accepted a chair, declined "the makings," proffered a cigaret. During these amenities his eyes flew about the room.

"Good Lord!" he ejaculated. "Is all that stuff your copying?"

There was a pile of loose and scattered manuscript upon the table under the gas-jet.

"Yes, sir." Dickie smiled. "I was plumb foolish to go to all that labor."

Lorrimer drew near to the table and coolly looked over the papers. Dickie watched him with rather a startled air and a flush that might have seemed one of resentment, if his eyes had not worn their impersonal, observing look.

"All poetry," muttered Lorrimer. "But some of it only a line—or a word." He read aloud— "close to the sun in lonely lands'— what's that from, anyway?"

"A poem about an eagle by a man named Alfred Tennyson. Ain't it the way a fellow feels, though, up on top of a rocky peak?"

"Never been on the top of a rocky peak—kind of a sky-scraper sensation, isn't it? What's all this—'I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, after my fashion'?"

Dickie's face again flamed in spite of himself. "It's a love poem. The fellow couldn't forget. He couldn't keep himself from loving that way because he loved so much the other way—well, sir, you better read it for yourself. It's a mighty real sort of a poem—if you were that sort of a fellow, I mean."

"And this is 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol.' And here's a sonnet, 'It was not like your great and gracious ways'—Coventry Patmore. Well, young man, you've a catholic taste."

"I don't rightly belong to any church," said Dickie gravely. "My mother is a Methodist."

Lorrimer moved abruptly away and moved abruptly back.

"Where were you educated, Dick?"

"I was raised in Millings," Dickie named the Western state. "I didn't get only to grammar school. My father needed me to work in his hotel."

"Too bad!" sighed Lorrimer. "Well, I'll bid you good night. And many thanks. You've got a fine place here." Again he sighed. "I dare say—one of these days—"

HE WAS absent and irritable again. Dickie accompanied him down the three long narrow flights and climbed back to his loneliness. He was, however, very much excited by his adventure, excited and disturbed. He felt restless. He walked about and whistled to himself.

Until now he had had but one companion —the thought of Sheila. It was extraordinary how immediate she was. During the first dreadful weeks of his drudgery in the stifling confusions of the restaurant, when even the memory of Sylvester's tongue-lashings faded under the acute reality of the head-waiter's sarcasms, that love of his for Sheila had fled away and left him dull and leaden and empty of his soul. And his tiny third-story bedroom had seemed like a coffin when he laid himself down in it and tried to remember her. It had come to him like a mountain wind, overwhelmingly, irresistibly, the desire to live where she lived; the first wish he had had since he had learned that she was not to be found by him.

And the miracle had accomplished itself. Mrs. Halligan had been instructed to get a lodger almost at any price for the long-vacant studio room. She lowered the rent to the exact limit of Dickie's wages. She had never bargained with so bright-eyed and hungry-looking an applicant for lodgings, and that night he lay awake under Sheila's stars. From then on he lived always in her presence. Here in the room that had known her he kept himself fastidious and clean. He shut out the wolf-pack of his shrewd desires.

The room was sanctuary. It was to rescue Sheila rather than himself that Dickie fled up to the stars. So deeply, so intimately, had she become a part of him that he seemed to carry her soul in his hands. So had the young dreamer wedded his dream. He lived with Sheila as truly, as loyally, as though he knew that she would welcome him with one of those downward rushes or give him God-speed on sultry, feverish dawns with a cool kiss. Dickie lay sometimes across his bed and drew her cheek in trembling fancy close to his until the anguish wet his pillow with mute tears.

Now to this dual loneliness Lorrimer had climbed, and Dickie felt rather gratefully that life had reached up to the aching unrealities of his existence. His tight and painful life had opened like the first fold of a fan. He built upon the promise of a friendship with this questioning, impertinent, mocking, keenly sympathetic visitor.

But a fortnight passed without Lorrimer's appearing at the restaurant, and when at last he did come, Dickie, flying to his chair, was greeted by a cold, unsmiling word and a businesslike quotation

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from the menu. He felt as though he had been struck. His face burned. In the West a fellow couldn't do that and get away with it! He tightened an impotent thin fist. He filled the order and kept his distance, and absurdly enough gave Lorrimer's tip to another waiter and went without his own dinner. For the first time in his life a sense of social inferiority, of humiliation concerning the nature of his work, came to him. He felt the pang of servitude, a pang unknown to the inhabitants of frontier towns. When Sheila washed dishes for Mrs. Hudson, she was "the young lady from Noo York who helps round at Hudson's house." Dickie fought this shame sturdily, but it seemed to cling, to have a sticky pervasiveness. Try as he might he couldn't brush it off his mind.

NEVERTHELESS it was on the very heels of this embittering experience that life plucked him up from his slough. One of the levelling public catastrophes came to Dickie's aid—not that he knew it was a dumb prayer for aid. He knew only that every day was harder to face than the last, that every night the stars up there through Sheila's skylight seemed to glimmer more dully, with less inspiration on his fagged spirit.

The sluggish monotony of the restaurant's existence was stirred that September night by a big neighboring fire. Waiters and guests tumbled out to the call of fire-engines and running feet. Dickie found himself beside Lorrimer, who caught him by the elbow.

"Keep by me, kid," he said, and there was something in his tone that softened injury. "If you want a good look in, I can get throught the ropes."

He showed his card to a policeman, pulled Dickie after him, and they found themselves in an inner circle of the inferno. Before them a tall hideous warehouse broke forth into a horrible beauty. It was as though a tortured soul had burst bars. It roared and glowed and sent up petals of smoky rose and seeds of fire against the blue-black sky. The crowds pressed against the ropes and turned up their faces to drink in the terror of the spectacle.

Lorrimer had out his note-book. "Damn fires!" he said. "They bore me. Does all this look like anything to you? That fire and those people and their silly faces all tilted up and turned red and blue and purple——"

He was talking to himself, and so really was Dickie, when he made his own statement in a queer tone of frightened awe. "They look like a flower garden in Hell," he whispered.

Lorrimer threw up his chin. "Say that again, will you?" he snapped out. "Go on. Don't stop. Tell me everything that comes into your damn young head of a wandering Martian! Fly at it. I'll take you down."

"You mean," said Dickie, "tell you what I think this looks like?"

"That's what I mean, bo."

Dickie smiled a queer sort of a smile. He had found a listener at last. A moment later Lorrimer's pencil was in rapid motion. And the reporter's eyes shot little stabbing looks at Dickie's unself-conscious face. When it was over, he snapped an elastic round his note-book, returned it to his pocket, and laid his hand on Dickie's thin tense arm.

"Come along with me, Dick," said Lorrimer. "You've won. I've been fighting you and my duty to my neighbor for a fortnight. Your waiter days are over. I've adopted you. I'm my brother's keeper all right. We'll both go hungry now and then, probably, but what's the odds? I need you. I haven't been able to hand in a story like that for years. I'm a burnt-out candle and you're the divine fire. I'm going to educate the life out of you. I'm going to train you till you'll wish you'd died young and ungrammatical in Millings. I may not be much good myself," he added solemnly, "but God gave me the sense to know the real thing when I see it. I've been fighting you, calling myself a fool for weeks. Come along, young fellow, don't hang back, and for your credit's sake close your lips so you won't look like a case of arrested development. First we'll say good-by to the hash-hole and the white apron, and then I'll take you up to your sky-parlor and we'll talk things over."

"God!" said Dickie faintly. It was a prayer for some enlightenment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Desertion

HILLIARD rode up along Hidden Creek on a frosty October morning. Everywhere now the aspens were torches of gold, the cottonwood trees smoky and gaunt, the ground bright with fallen leaves. He had the look of a man who has swept his heart clean of devils. His face was keen with his desire. He sang as he rode—sweetly, an old sentimental Spanish song, something his mother had taught him; but it was not of his mother he thought, or only, perhaps, deep down in his subconsciousness of that early mother-worship, age-old and most mysterious, which now he had translated and transferred.

Sweet, sweet is the jasmine flower—
Let its stars guide thee.
Sweet is the heart of a rose—
Sweet is the thought of thee—
Deep in my heart.

The dogs were off coursing the woods that afternoon, and the little clearing lay as still as a green lake under the threatening crest of the mountain. Cosme slipped from his horse, pulled the reins over his head, and left him to graze at will.

Miss Blake opened the ranch-house door at his knock. She greeted him with a sardonic smile. "I don't know whether you'll see your girl or not," she said. "Give her time to get over her tantrums."

Cosme turned a lightning look upon her. "Tantrums? Sheila?"

"Oh, my friend, she has a devil of her own, that little angel-face! Make yourself comfortable." Miss Blake pointed him to a chair. "I'll tell her you're here."

She went to the foot of the ladder which rose from the middle of the living-room floor, and called heartily, an indulgent laugh in her voice. "You, Sheila! Better come down! Here's your beau."

There was no answer.

"Hear me, Sheila? Mis-ter Cos-me Hilliard."

This time some brief and muffled answer was returned. Miss Blake smiled and went over to her elk-horn throne. There she sat and sewed—an incongruous occupation it looked.

Cosme was leaning forward, elbows on knees, his face a study of impatience, anger and suspicion.

"What made her mad?" he asked bluntly.

"O-oh! She'll get over it. She'll be down. Sheila can't resist a young man. You'll see."

"What did you do?" insisted the stern crisp un-western voice. When Cosme was angry he reverted rapidly to type.

"Why," drawled Miss Blake, "I crept up when she was drying her hair and I cut it off." She laughed loudly at his fierce start.

"Cut off her hair! What right——?"

"No right at all, my friend, but common-sense. What's the good of all that fluffy stuff hanging about and taking hours of her time to brush and wash and what not? Besides—" she shot a look at him—"it's part of the cure."

"By the Lord," said Cosme, "I'd like you to explain."

The woman crossed her legs calmly. She was still indulgently amused.

"Don't lose your head, young man," she advised. "Better smoke."

After an instant Cosme rolled and lighted a cigaret and leaned back in his chair. His anger had settled to a sort of patient contempt.

"I've put her into breeches too," said Miss Blake.

"What the devil! What do you mean? She has a will of her own, hasn't she?"

"Oh, yes. But you see I've got Miss Sheila just about where I want her. She's grateful enough for her food and the roof over her head and for the chance I'm giving her."

"Chance?" He laughed shortly. "Chance to do all your heavy work?"

"Why not say *honest* work? It's something new to her."

There was a brief thunderous silence. Cosme's cigaret burned between his stiff fingers. "What do you mean?" he asked, hoarse with the effort of his self-control.

SHE looked at him sharply now. "Are you Paul Carey Hilliard's son—the son of Roxana Hilliard?" she asked. She pointed a finger at him.

"Yes" he—answered with thin lips. His eyes narrowed. His face was all Latin, all cruel.

"Well—" Miss Blake slid her hands reflectively back and forth on the bone arms of her chair. She had put down her work. "I was just thinking," she said slowly and kindly, "that the son of your mother would be rather extra careful in choosing the mother of his sons."

"I shall be very careful," he answered between the thin lips. "I *am* being careful."

She fell back with an air of relief. "Oh," she said as though illuminated—"O-oh! I understand. Then it's all right. I didn't read your game."

His face caught fire at her apparent misunderstanding.

"I don't read yours," he said.

"Game? Bless you, I've no game to play. I'm giving Sheila her chance. But I'm not going to give her a chance at the cost of your happiness. You're too good a lad for that. I thought you were going to

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UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE

GEORGE WASHINGTON had just been drafted, and was strutting before his friends, dressed in his new uniform.

They admired him very much, but finally one of them said: "You sho' do look mighty fine, but tell me, George, what do dem lettahs U. S. N. A. stand for?"

"Mah goodness, niggah, don't you know dat?" asked George. "Why dem stands for Uncle Sam's Niggah Army."

MRS. DYER, who had enjoyed thirty-five years of matrimonial happiness, had a jovial old colored woman for a cook. One afternoon, which proved to be the mistress's birthday, a box of beautiful roses was left for her when Liza happened to be present. Liza eyed them longingly for a few moments, then inquired with evident astonishment: "Yo' husban' send yo' all those pretty flowers yo' gets, Missy?"

"Yes, indeed, Liza," Mrs. Dyer replied, holding the roses against her wealth of snow-white hair.

"Well, well!" exclaimed the cook, turning to go. "He suttinly am holdin' out well."

CHARLEY BRONSON, a farmer of the middle West is noted for being a man of one idea. Last summer a big spring, which for years had been furnishing all the water he needed for his farm, commenced to show indications of giving out. Charley finally decided to put down another well, and made a contract with a couple of drillers. The job was started, and had been under way for some time, when one of the drillers came running to Charley in great excitement, and breathlessly told him that oil had been struck.

"Oil!" roared Charley. "Oil! Why in blazes do you waste your time coming to tell me you've struck oil? Don't you know enough to pull out your tools and start another hole? That's the only way to get water."

THE dainty little nurse had patted the pillows and put the final touches of comfort for the night around the room and bed of the convalescent old gentleman, who was feeling more than usually gay.

"Is there anything else I can do for you?" she asked, turning to leave.

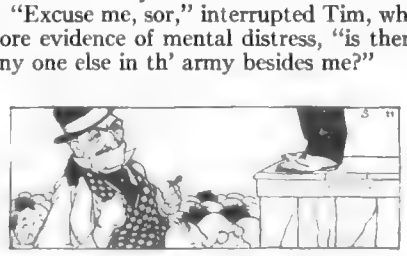
"Only kiss me good night," said the old one.

"Oh—I'll send the orderly," she countered sweetly as she closed the door; "he does all the hard work around here."

EDITOR'S NOTE—Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

TIM, a brand-new orderly and fresh recruit, was receiving instructions from his captain. "Your work will be to take care of my wardrobe, clean my boots, belt and so forth, shave me, look after my horse, which you must groom with the greatest care, and clean the equipment. After you have finished with that, you go to the hut, lend a hand when you are needed and after breakfast help in washing the dishes. At eight o'clock you go on parade and drill till eleven-thirty."

"Excuse me, sor," interrupted Tim, who bore evidence of mental distress, "is there any one else in th' army besides me?"



BILLY SUNDAY is nothing if not quick-witted, so it was easy for him to squelch a would-be heckler who sneeringly demanded: "Just where is this heaven you're all the time talking about?"

Billy's answer came quick as a flash: "Just turn to your right, and keep straight forward and you can't miss it."

Why Teachers Go Mad

SOPHOMORE interpreting "Idylls of the King." "*Guinevere* didn't recognize *Arthur* because he wore his knight clothes."

In physiology examination: "The cerebellum is the stomach, sometimes vulgarly referred to as the 'belly.'"

Question given in English: "When and *why* was Coleridge born?"

MRS. HICKS, a Maine housewife, is so painfully neat that she makes life a misery for her family. One of her rules is that all members of the household must remove their shoes before entering the house.

"Bill," she remonstrated with her husband, "I found a grease-spot on one of the chairs. I think it came off these pants you wear in the shop."

A brief silence ensued, then a volcanic eruption: "Well, Mirandy, for the last fifteen years I've taken off my shoes every time I've entered this house, but I'll be hanged if I'll go further."

CHARLES M. SCHWAB instructed his secretary to get him two tickets for "Charley's Aunt," at the time that production was popular.

Summoning a page, the secretary said: "Go round to the theatre and get two tickets for 'Charley's Aunt,' please."

The boy took the money, but after he had gone a few steps he turned back and queried respectfully: "Don't you think I'd better say Mr. Schwab's aunt, sir?"

THE midnight hour was sounded, although the young man in the parlor apparently was well satisfied with his present surroundings and had no intention of making any immediate change, until father appeared in the doorway, watch in hand.

"Young man," said he, none too gently, "all 1920 models are equipped with self-starters. Where is yours?"

THE commanding officer of a labor battalion in France, while out walking one day, saw one of his men, "in the distance," off duty without permission. The soldier, spying the officer, immediately hid behind a tree. The officer passed on, but the next day he sent for the man.

"Don't you know," said the officer, "that you are not free to walk in the streets of this town till after five o'clock?"

"Yes, sir, I know it," said the soldier.

"Well, if you know it, why did I see you yesterday?"

"Because," replied the soldier, "the tree was too small."

DURING the war, a cadet being examined for his commission was asked: "How would you distinguish the officer of the deck when the ship is in port?"

His answer was: "He wears white gloves and carries a binnacle."

"PLEASE," gasped the young wife excitedly, on giving her first order to the butcher, "Please send me a pound of steak and some—some gravy."

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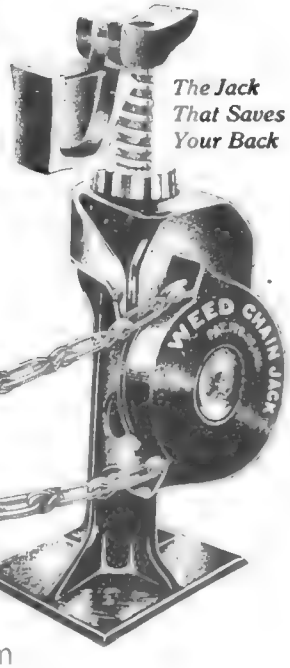

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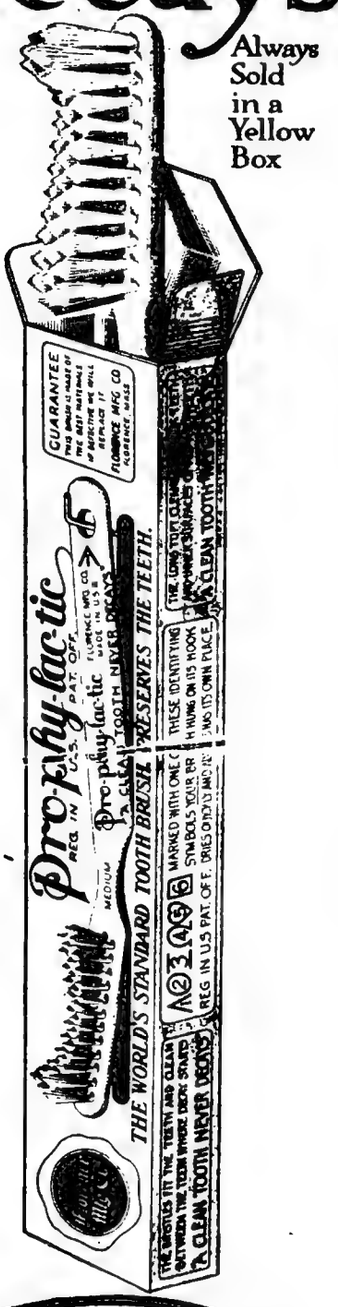
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Brush Your Upper Teeth Downward and Your Lower Teeth Upward

MARY WOLLASTON

(*Continued from page 61*)

said he could never forgive himself for the way he'd treated her—in order to curry favor with me. And he said that the first thing in the morning he was going to her. That's all. Oh, well, I said a few things to him, too. Do you wonder?"

By way of a flourish, she flashed to her feet again at this conclusion (she'd been up and down half a dozen times in the course of her appeal to him as jury) and walked away to a window. But after the silence had spun itself out to the better part of a minute, she whipped round upon him. "Have you been listening to a word I've said?" she demanded.

"Yes," he said, but with the contradictory air of fetching himself back from a long way off. "Yes, truly! I've listened to every word, and I don't wonder a bit.

"Don't wonder at what?"

"That you said a few things to him, too. You've got a perfectly valid grievance, it seems to me. You couldn't be blamed for quarreling with him over it as bitterly as possible."

She barely heeded the words. They never did mean much to Paula. But his look and his tone reached her, and stung.

"Look here!" she said with sudden intensity. "Before we go any farther, I want to know this. Did Mary really need John, yesterday?"

She saw him pale a little and she had to wait two or three long breaths for her answer. But it came evenly enough at last.

"I happened to turn up instead. And she's perfectly all right, to-day."

Her eyes filled with tears. She turned forlornly away from him and drooped down upon a settee. "You hate me, too, I suppose, as well as he."

He sat down beside her and laid a hand upon her shoulder. "My dear," he said—and his own voice had a little break of tenderness in it—"I couldn't hate any one to-day if I wanted to. And I never could want to hate you. If there's anything I can do to help you with John Wollaston— But you see, if you want to keep your grievance you don't need any help. Nobody can take it away from you. It's only if you want to get rid of it—because it's making you beastly unhappy, no matter how valid it is—that you need any help from me or any one else. If that's what you want, I'll take a shot at writing you a prescription."

"Go crawling back to him on my knees," she said in a tone not quite so genuinely resentful as she felt it ought to be. "And ask him to forgive me. What's the good of that when he doesn't love me?—Oh, of course I know he does—in a way."

His hand dropped absently from her shoulder. After a thoughtful moment he sprang up and took a turn of the room. "Do you know," he said, halting before her, "'in a way' is the only way there is. The only way any two people ever do love each other. That's what makes half the trouble, I believe. Trying to define it as if it were a standard thing. Like sterling silver; so many and so many hundredths per cent. pure. Love's whatever the personal emotion is that draws two people together. It may be anything. It may make them kind to each other, or it may make them nag each other into the madhouse, or it may make them shoot each other dead. It's probably never exactly the same thing between any two pairs of people."

"Don't talk nonsense," she said, petulantly.

"I'm not a bit sure it's nonsense," he persisted. "I only just thought of it, but I believe I've got onto something. Well, if I'm right, then the problem is to adjust that emotion to your life, or your life to that emotion, in such a way that the thing will work. There aren't any rules. There can't be any. It's a matter of—well, that's the word—adjustment."

SHE could not see that this was helping her much. It was not at all the line she'd projected for him. Yet she was finding it hard not to feel less tragic about it all. She had even caught herself, just now, upon the brink of being amused. "Wait till you've tried to adjust something, as you say, with John, and have had him tell you what you think until you believe you do. When he's really being perfectly unreasonable all the while."

"Of course," March observed with the air of one making a material concession, "he is a good bit of a prima donna himself."

"What do you mean by that?" she demanded. And then, petulantly, she accused him of laughing at her, of refusing to take her seriously, of trying to be clever like the Wollastons.

"Look here, Paula," he said, and he put so much edge into his tone that she did, "have you ever spent five minutes out of the last five years trying to think what John was, besides your husband? I don't believe it. When I spoke of him to you, months ago, as a famous person, you didn't know what I was talking about. He is. He's got a better chance—say, to get into the next edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica than you have. He's got a career. He had it long before he knew you existed. How old was he when he came to Vienna? About fifty, wasn't he?"

"Forty-nine," she said with the air of one making a serious contradiction; but her "Oh, well—" and a little laugh that followed it conceded that it was not.

"He'd had a career then for a long time," March went on. "He was established. He had things about as he wanted them. And then, out of nowhere, an irresistible thing like you came along and torpedoed him. He must have realized that he had gone clean out of his head about you. A man of that age doesn't fall in love unconsciously, nor easily either. He must have had frightful misgivings about persuading you to marry him. On your account as well as his own. Because he is that, you know. Conscientious I mean. Almost to a morbid degree."

"Oh, yes," she conceded, "they're both like that. They spend half their time working things out, trying to be fair."

He gave her a quick look, then came and sat down beside her again. "Well, then," he said, "we're on the right track. Just follow it along. You're the one big refractory thing in his life. The thing that constantly wants reconciling with something

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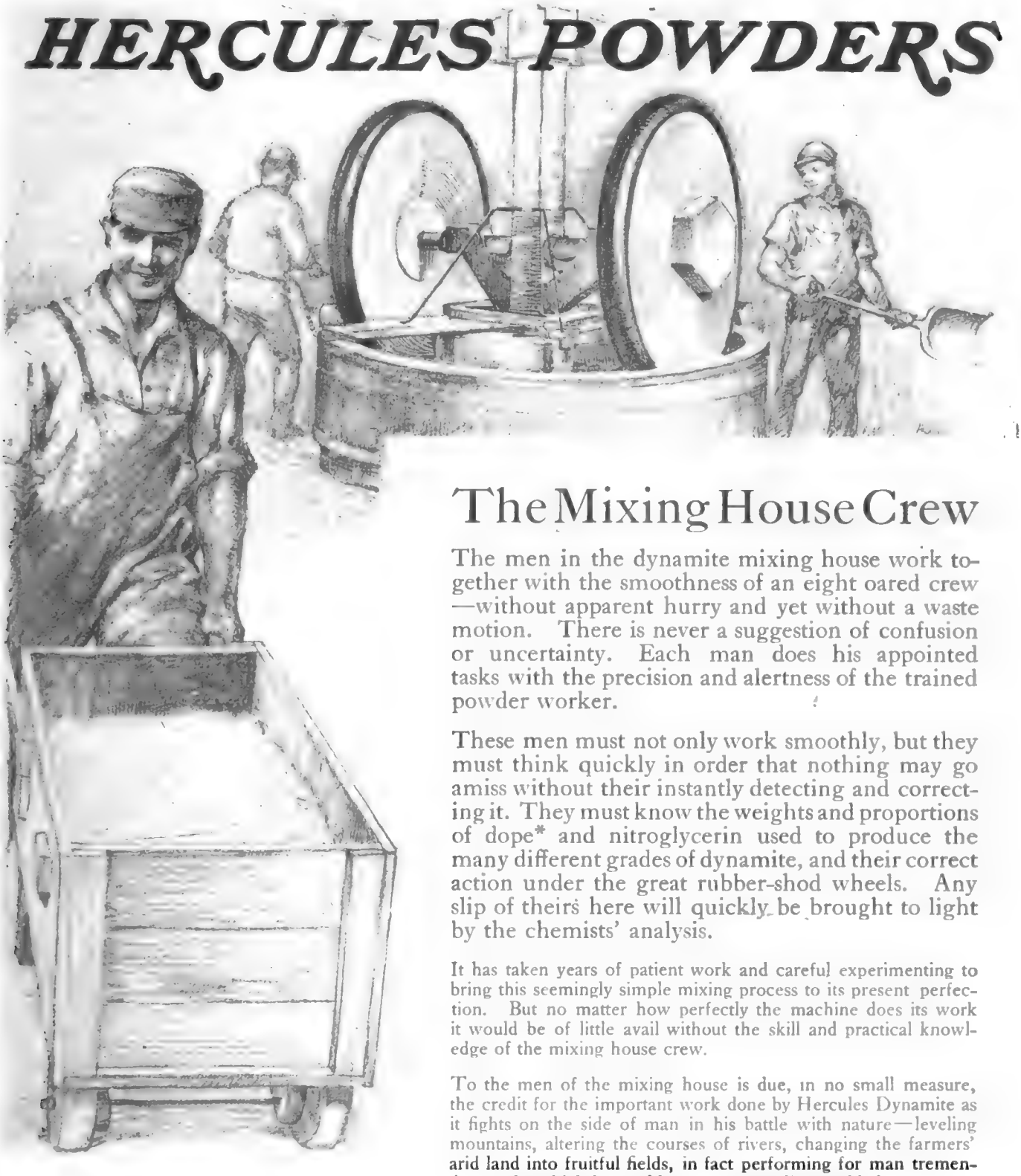
HERCULES POWDERS



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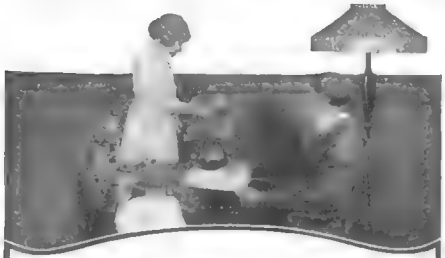

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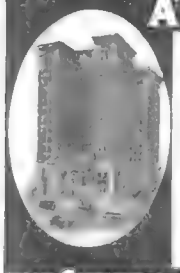

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else. And at the same time you're the delight of it, and the center and core of it. And while he's trying to deal with those problems justly, you know, he's taking on all of yours, too. He's trying to see things with your eyes, feeling them with your nerves, and since he's got a kind of uncanny penetration, I'd be willing to bet that he *can* tell you, half the time, what you're thinking about better than you could yourself. No wonder, between his conscience and his desire—your mutual desire—he's unreasonable. And since he's too old to be reformed out of his conscience that leaves the adjustment up to you."

"I don't know what more I can do," she protested. "I've offered to give up everything."

"Yes," he said with a grunt, "that's it. I don't wonder he flew at you. That's the thing you'll have to give up!"

He rose and stood over her and thumped home his point with one fist in the palm of the other hand. "Why, you've got to give up the nobility," he said. "The self-sacrificial attitude. You've got to chuck the heroine's rôle altogether, Paula. That's what you've been playing, naturally enough. It makes good drama for you, but look where it leaves him! First you give up your career for him, and then you give him up for the career you've undertaken for his sake. You've contrived to put him in the wrong both ways. Oh, not meaning to, I know; just instinct. Well, give that up. Give up the renunciatory gesture. Go to him and tell him the truth. That you want, in a perfectly human selfish way, all you can get, both of him and of a career. They aren't mutually exclusive really. It ought to be possible to have quite a lot of each."

"You think you know such a lot," she objected rebelliously, "but there's only one thing I want, just the same."

"No doubt that's true this afternoon," he conceded. "You sang *Thais* last night and some thousands of people, according to this morning's paper, cheered you at the end of the second act. But I believe I can tell you your daydream. It's to be the greatest dramatic soprano in the world—*home for a vacation.* With John and perhaps one or two small children of the affectionate age around you."

Her face flamed at that. "John has been talking about me this morning!" she cried.

He shook his head. "It was only a chance shot," he told her. "I'm sorry if it came close enough home to hurt. But there couldn't be a better daydream than that, and there's no reason I can see why it shouldn't come reasonably true, if you'll honestly try for as much of it as you can get. That's the prescription anyhow. Give up nobility and all the heroic poses that go with it and practise a little enlightened selfishness instead. Perhaps by force of example you may persuade John Wollaston to abandon about half of his conscience. Then you *would* be settled."

WITH that he went back to his score and by no protest or expostulation could she provoke another word out of him. She fidgeted about the room for a quarter of an hour or so. Then with the announcement that she was going to dress, left it and went up-stairs.

When she came down a while later in street things and a hat she presented him with a new perplexity.

"I've been trying everywhere I can think of to get a car," she said, "and there simply isn't one to be had. I even tried to borrow one."

He asked her what she wanted of a car. Where did she want to go?

"Oh, can't you see!" she cried. "I don't want to send for John again to come to me. I want to go to him. It's too maddening!"

"Well," he said, with a grin, "if you really want—desperately—to go to him, of course there's the trolley."

She stared at him a moment and then perceiving, or thinking she perceived, something vaguely allegorical about the suggestion, she gave a laugh, swooped down and kissed him and went.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT
The Kaleidoscope

IT WAS the next Sunday morning that Miss Wollaston, who had decided to stay in town even though the emergency to meet which she had been summoned was found mysteriously to have evanesced when she arrived, asked Wallace Hood, walking home with her from church, to come in to lunch.

"I haven't the least idea," she said, "whether we shall be quite by ourselves or whether the entire family, including the latest addition to it, will come straggling in before we've finished."

She would not have considered it quite delicate to own to him how very clearly she hoped to have him for an hour or two all to herself. He would be found, she was confident, not to have gone through the looking-glass into the world of topsy-turvy that all the rest of them seemed to be inhabiting these days. It would be comforting to talk with somebody who was still capable of regarding things right side to.

The surmise had formed itself irresistibly in Lucile's mind that John himself was involved in this decision of Mary's. Had she done this thing—tangled herself in the beginnings of it, anyhow—as a desperate measure to bring her father and his wife together again? By removing a temptation that Paula was still in danger of yielding to? She didn't put it to herself quite as crudely as that, to be sure.

Certainly she had no intention of asking Wallace Hood what he thought about that. But perhaps he might have some other explanation of her niece's sacrifice. It must have been a sacrifice to something; an answer to some fancied call of duty. Unless it were a freak of sheer perversity. But this was dangerous ground for Lucile.

The queerest thing about it all was the way it seemed—magically—to be producing such beneficent results. John and Paula were reconciled by it—or at least as soon as it happened. Paula had come down from High Forest that very day, had had some sort of scene with her husband, and the two had been almost annoyingly at one upon every conceivable subject since. Something had happened also during the week to Rush, which lightened the gloom that had been hanging on him so long—some utterly surprising interview with Graham Stannard's father. Pure coincidence one must suppose this

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to be, of course. Mary's engagement couldn't have anything to do with it. And then Mary herself! The girl was a new person. Absolutely radiant. Orthodox conduct of course for a just-engaged girl—but in the circumstances one would think——

She saw that Wallace hesitated a little about accepting her invitation to lunch and recalled the fact that he hadn't dropped in on them once during the week, though he had known that they were more or less back in town.

"Why, yes, I'll come, with pleasure," he said. "I don't know precisely what sort of terms I'm on with John. He felt for a few days, I know, that I'd been rather officious, but I may as well have it out with him now as later. And I will be glad of an opportunity to give Mary my best wishes. I wrote her a note, of course, the day I read the announcement of the engagement in the newspapers." He added: "I certainly was in the dark as to that affair."

"Aren't you—still more or less in the dark about it?" Miss Wollaston inquired.

"I don't mind owning that I am. Mary's sense of social values always seemed to me to be at least adequately developed. On the surface one would have to call her rather worldly, I think."

"On the surface perhaps," Wallace interposed, "but not really; not at heart. Still, I'll grant it isn't easy to understand. There's a certain attraction about the man of course. And then there's his music."

"And Mary," Miss Wollaston observed, "happens to be the one utterly unmusical person in the family. She's completely absorbed in the preparation for his opera, however." Then after a little pause: "She may prove rather more explanatory with you than she has been with me. She seems to take a certain pleasure in mystifying me. In saying things in a matter-of-fact way that are quite astounding. That's the new generation, of course. They talk a different language from mine. It will be a comfort," she concluded, rather pathetically, as they mounted the high steps to her brother's door, "to talk the matter over quietly with some one to whom my ideas and standards are still intelligible."

BUT this comfort was, for the present, to be denied her. Mary had spent the morning in her room writing notes and was coming down the stairs when the churchgoers came in.

She negotiated what were left of the steps in a single swoop, gave her visitor both hands along with the "Wallace! How nice!" that welcomed him, and then, drawing back with a gesture which invited his scrutiny, said, "Well? What do you think? Oh, but thanks for your note, first. I've just answered it."

Radiant was the word. There couldn't be any doubt of that. And younger. There was a twinkle of mischief that he had to go back—five years, anyhow—to remember the like of.

He had none of Lucile's feeling that decency required one's joy over an event of this sort to be of the chastened variety and he brightened in instantaneous response to the girl's mood, but the mere impact of her left him for a moment wordless.

"You needn't try to make me a speech," she told him. "I know you're pleased. Not as pleased as you would be if you knew all about it, but——"

"As pleased as possible, anyhow," he said. On that, amicably arm in arm, they followed Miss Wollaston into the drawing-room.

"I don't believe we've seen each other," she remarked, "since the night we had dinner together at the Saddle and Cycle, weeks and weeks ago."

"No," he said. "I remember very well that we haven't."

MISS Wollaston had drifted away from them (occupied, as she so often was when there were no persons present in the formal status of guests, in making minute readjustments of pillows and things as a sort of standing protest against the demon of disorder), and having noted this fact he went on:

"I didn't come for the picnic tea you invited me to the other day. If I'd known how the land lay, I shouldn't have sent a substitute. I'm afraid, perhaps, that was rather—tactless of me."

He saw the queerest look come into her face—enough in itself to startle him rather, though it wasn't without a gleam of humor.

"I was just wondering," she explained, "whether if you had come that particular day, I mightn't be engaged to you, now, instead of to Tony."

Unluckily Lucile heard that and froze rigid for a moment with horror. Then recovering her motor faculties, she moved in a stately manner toward the door.

"I think if you will excuse me," she said, "I'll go up and prepare for luncheon."

Mary gazed conscience-stricken from her to Wallace, who was blushing like a boy caught stealing apples. "I'm sorry," she gasped, but not quickly enough for the apology to overtake her aunt. "It's terrible of me to say things like that, and I do, every now and then. Can you bear with me until I've had time to quiet down a little? It's all so new, to be happy like this. I'm a little—wild with it."

In his nice neutral unexaggerated way he told her that her happiness could never be anything but a joy to him; and after that, when they were seated side by side upon the cane davenport, he asked about her plans—when they were going to be married, where they meant to live, and so on.

"Why, we'll be married, I suppose," she said, "at the end of the customary six weeks' engagement. There isn't a thing to wait for, really."

"I'm glad of that," he remarked.

Anybody but Mary would have taken that at its face value; he was glad that they would have to wait no longer. But he flinched a little as she glanced round toward him and at that she laughed and patted his hand reassuringly.

"We're doing everything correctly," she told him, "beginning with father's announcement of the engagement in the papers, Tuesday. We remain on exhibition during the conventional six weeks and then we're married at noon over in the Fourth Church. Impeccable! That's going to be our middle name."

Mary used so very little slang that she was able to produce quite extraordinary effects with it when she did.

"I'm very glad," Wallace said, a little ruffled by the start she had given him, "that you have not been persuaded to do anything—differently."

"Who do you suppose it was," she asked, "who insisted, in an adamantine manner, that it be done like that? It wasn't I and it wasn't Aunt Lucile. It was Anthony March." She added, after a little reflective silence: "He was right about it, of course, because when that's over it's done with. And then—what he hasn't thought of, and I wouldn't have, most likely until it was too late—he'll have a friendlier audience next Tuesday night than if he'd given me my way and made a trip to the City Hall with me last Monday. I wanted to burn my bridges, you see—and he laughed at me! I haven't told that to any one but you. All the same, if he thinks, from that, that he can go on accumulating—millstones——"

"Tell me where you are planning to live," Wallace said, getting back, as he was always glad to do, to firm ground again. "Not too far away, I hope, for us to go on seeing a lot of you."

"Oh, it's very sad about that," she told him. "I was hoping to live with him in his secret lair over the Italian grocery. No, but it was really delightful. One big room, bigger than this, with dormers and dusty beams and an outside stair. He's had it for years. It's not half a mile from here—and Paula could never find out where it was! But, unexpectedly, he's being turned out. I could have wept when he told me."

"Unexpectedly!" quoted Wallace, the professional real-estate man in him touched by this evidence of lay negligence. "March hadn't any lease, I suppose?"

"He didn't need any," said Mary. "He owned it."

"If he owns it, how can they turn him out—unexpectedly?"

"What he owned was the second story. Well, he still does, of course. But when they tear the first floor and the basement out from under him, as they're going to do next week, his second story won't do him much good."

"But, good gracious, they can't do that!" Wallace cried. "They must leave him his floor and his ceiling just where they are now. And his light. They can build above and below—I suppose that's what they're tearing down the old building for—but that layer of space, if he really bought it and has got anything to show that he really bought it, belongs to him."

"DO YOU mean seriously," she demanded, "that it's possible to buy the second story of a building? It's like Pudd'n'head Wilson's joke about buying half a dog and killing his half."

"Of course I mean it," he insisted. "An easement like that cost our estate thousands of dollars only a year or two ago. Serious! I should think it was! Ask Rodney Aldrich. See what he says. Of course, it's nothing unless he can show some instrument that proves his title. But if he can, it might be worth— Well, it's just a question how badly they happen to need that particular bit of land. Those people we fell foul of managed to hold us up for a tidy sum."

She was looking at him thoughtfully, a faint, rather wry smile just touching her lips. "A minute ago," she said, "I was about to fling myself upon your neck and thank you for so wonderful a wedding-

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present to us as that would be. And now I'm wondering—Wallace, I don't suppose it would strike you that there was anything—shady about doing a thing like that."

"Shady!" He was, for a moment, deeply affronted by the mere suggestion. Then, remembering her total ignorance of all such matters, he smiled at her. "My dear Mary, do you think—leaving my rectitude aside—that I'd have referred you to Rodney Aldrich if I'd felt that there was anything questionable about it?"

"I know," she conceded. "And Martin Whitney would feel the same way. And Father, I suppose, and Rush. Everybody we know. Yet I was wondering whether I'd say anything to Tony about it. I've decided I will, but I'm going to ask you not to, nor to anybody else, until I've talked to him. I'd like it left—altogether to him, you see."

He agreed, rather blankly, to this. Presently she went on:

"I'm glad he's a real genius, not just a fragment of one, as so many of them are. There's something—robust about him. And since that's so, I don't believe we'll do him any real harm, we—advantage-snatchers, you know. That's so very largely how we live, we nice people (it's why we're able to be nice, of course)—that we get perfectly blind to it. But he's so strong, and he can see in so deep, that I guess he's safe. That's the belief I have to go on, anyhow."

She sprang up and gave him another pat upon the shoulder. "He'll be getting here in a few minutes, I expect. Father telephoned that he and Paula were going to bring him down as soon as his rehearsal was over. I'm going up now to try to make my peace with Aunt Lucile."

AFTER lunch she told the family that she had matters to talk over with Tony and meant to take him for a walk. His father and mother expected them to drop in at their house about five, and the intervening two hours would give them just about time to "cover the ground." She was openly laughing at her own pretense at being matter-of-fact.

It was pretty hot for walking, her father thought. Why not let Pete drive them around a while in the car? Or take the small car and drive herself? But she was feeling pedestrian, she said, and, anyhow, the topic she had in mind couldn't be discussed in a motor-car. They'd go to Lincoln Park and stroll around in the shade.

"And if we get tired," she added with a flicker, in response to her aunt's movement of protest, "we can squeeze in among the other couples on some grassy bank. Oh, Aunt Lucile, don't mind! We *won't* do anything—disgraceful."

"You see what a cat I am," she told March as they set out. "I make her squirm without meaning to, and then, when she squirms, I scratch. Now talk to me until I can get in a good humor with myself again."

"I've two or three things to tell you," he said. "I saw Sylvia Stannard this morning. She came to rehearsal with the little Williamson girl, and carried me off bodily for a talk. She's had a long letter from Graham.

"He's quite well," he went on swiftly, ignoring the gasp she gave, "and doesn't want to be, as he says, fussed over."

"Where is he?" she asked. "I'll write him a letter, of course. Only you'll have to tell me what to say."

"He's visiting a friend—a college classmate—on Long Island. And he's already had a job offered him by his friend's father, in an engineering office. He's a pretty good engineer, I believe. He thinks he'll accept it. Anyhow, he is definitely not coming back to Hickory Hill. Sylvia attaches some significance to the fact that his friend also has a pretty sister, but that's just the cynicism of youth, I expect."

That last suggestion silenced her—with another gasp, as perhaps he had meant it to do. He added, presently:

"As for writing, I've already done that myself."

"You!" she exclaimed. "Where's the letter?"

"It's already dispatched. I wrote it as soon as the rehearsal was over. But I'll tell you what I said in it. I told him I supposed he had heard of our engagement, but that I knew you wished him to be told of it personally. You were very fond of him, I said, and the only thing that clouded your happiness was a fear that he might not be able to share it. I assured him that I was completely in your confidence and knew that you had been through a period of very severe nervous stress, verging upon a nervous breakdown, but that I believed you were on the way to a speedy recovery. And I ended by saying that I believed a line from him to you, setting some of your misgivings at rest, would hasten it. And I was his most cordially."

She didn't try to pretend she wasn't aghast at this. "But what an—extraordinary letter! Won't he be—furious? At you for writing—speaking for me in a case like that? Telling him you knew all about it?"

"Well, that was more or less the idea," he confessed, with a rueful grin. "He'll think I stole you away from him; he'll think I gave you the nervous prostration I hinted at. Heaven knows what he won't think! But of course, the more of a villain I am the less you're to be held responsible. And there's nothing insupportable or—ludicrous about a grievance against another man. At all events it enables him to get round the statement you demolished him with. No, you'll see. He'll write you a letter, correctly affectionate, but rather chilly, and after that you'll be off his mind. And if the pretty sister Sylvia alleges doesn't exist, there'll be another one along pretty soon who will."

SHE was obviously a little dazed by all this. It was the first time they had talked of Graham since that night in his room, and he knew the bruise from that experience must still be painful to touch. So he hastened to produce his other item of news—also provided by Sylvia.

"This is a perfectly dead secret of hers," he began, "told me in sacred confidence. She finished, however, by saying that she knew, of course, I'd go straight and tell you. So to justify her penetration, I will. Sylvia has accounted for her father's amazing change of attitude toward Hickory Hill. It seems she's persuaded her father to give Graham's share of it to her. She told him—what's obviously true—that she's a better farmer now than Graham would ever be. She hates town and society and all that, she says, and never will be happy anywhere but on a farm—anywhere, indeed, but on that farm. He was very rough and boisterous about the suggestion, she says, for a day or two, but finally he quieted down like a lamb and gave in. He never has refused her anything, of course."

"But a partnership between her and Rush!" Mary cried. "It's perfectly, impossibly mad. Unless, of course— You don't mean——"

"Yes, that's the idea exactly," March said. "Only Rush as yet knows nothing about it. Hence the need for secrecy. Sylvia acknowledged to her father that she couldn't possibly own a farm in partnership with a young man of twenty-three unless she married him, but she said she'd intended to marry Rush ever since she was twelve years old. She's confident that he's only waiting for her eighteenth birthday to ask her to marry him, but she says that if he doesn't, she means to ask him. And if he refuses, she pointed out to her father, he can't do less than consent to sell the other half of the farm to her. She treats that alternative, though, as derisory. And I haven't a doubt she's right. Evidently her father has none, either.

"Well, it accounts for the change in Mr. Stannard's attitude toward the farm, of course," he concluded. "A son's supposed to thrive on adversity. It wouldn't be good morals not to make things difficult for him by way of developing his character. But where a daughter is involved he can chuckle and write checks. Under this tradition, he's entitled to regard her as a luxury. Anyhow, your father has nothing more to worry about as far as Rush and Hickory Hill are concerned."

"LIFE'S a kaleidoscope," Mary said. "I'm tired. Let's sit down." They were half-way up the park by that time. "Oh, here on the grass. What does it matter?" When they were thus disposed she went back to her figure. "There's just a little turn by some big wrist that we don't know anything about, and a little click, and the whole pattern changes."

"There are some patterns that don't change," he said soberly, but he didn't try to argue the point with her. He knew too exactly how she felt. "Tell me," he said, "what it was that you wanted to talk to me about."

She acknowledged that she'd been hoping he'd forgotten that, for the momentousness of his two items of news had left her, as her talk about kaleidoscopes indicated, rather disoriented. So he threw in, to give her time to get around to it, the information that both Sylvia and the little Williamson girl had decided they wanted to study music with him. "I agreed," he added, "to take them on, when I got round to it."

"Tony," she said, "I won't let you do that. Not music lessons to little girls. I won't."

"Afternoons?" he asked gently. "When I'm through the real day's work? It would be pretty good fun, trying to show a few people—young, unspoiled people—what music really is. Dynamite some of their sentimental ideas about it; shake them loose from some of the schoolmasters' niggling rules about it; make them write it themselves; show 'em the big

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shapes of it; make a piano keyboard something they know their way about in. That wouldn't be a contemptible job for anybody. Oh, well, we can talk that out later. But you needn't be afraid for me, my dear."

"That's what I said to Wallace Hood," she told him; "just before lunch. When I was trying to decide to tell you what he's been saying— About your room that they're turning you out of."

With that, she repeated the whole of the talk with Wallace and the serio-fantastic idea that it had led up to.

He grinned over it a while in silence, then asked: "Are you willing to leave it entirely to me?"

"Of course," she said.

"Well then," he decided, "if I've still got that paper—and I think I have—I copied it, I remember, out of an old law-book, and to satisfy Luigi's passion for the picturesque and the liturgical we took it to a notary and got it sealed with a big red wafer— Well, if I've got it and it's any good, I'll let Aldrich—is that his name?—make what he can of it. I'll square it with Luigi afterward, of course."

"It's a compromise for you," she said gravely. "You wouldn't have done that two weeks ago."

He laughed. "Folks use the word 'uncompromising' as if it were always a praiseworthy thing to be. But it hardly ever is, if you stop to think. Certainly if life's an art, like composing music or painting pictures, then compromise is in the very fabric of it—getting different themes or colors that would like to be contradictory to work together; developing a give and take. What's the important thing? To have a life that's full and good and serviceable, or to mince along through it with two or three sacred attitudes? Wait a minute."

She waited contentedly enough, watching him with a misty smile as he lay upon the grass beside her wrestling with his idea.

"All right," he said presently. "Here's the test that I'll agree to. I'll agree to do things or leave them undone, to the end that when I'm—sixty, say, I'll have packed more of permanent value into my life—my life as your husband and the father of your children—than that vagabond you're so concerned about would have had in his if—if——"

"If I hadn't gone to him a week ago last night?" She said it steadily enough, where he could not say it at all.

"Yes," he said. "That's what I mean."

He reached out for her hand and she gave it to him. Presently his face brightened once more into a grin. "I'll even promise to write more music. Lord, if I've really got anything, you couldn't stop me. Come along. Father and mother will be looking for us before very long now."

TWO nights later March's opera had its première. The critics agreed that it was a "distinct success," and then proceeded to disagree about everything else. The dean of the corps found it somewhat too heavily scored in the orchestra, and the vocal parts rather ungrateful technically. The reactionary put up his regular plaintive plea for melody, but supposed this was too much to ask, these days. The chauvinist detected German influence in the music (he had missed the parodic satire in March's quotations) and asked Heaven to answer why an American composer should have availed himself of a decadent French libretto.

The audience showed a friendly bias toward it at the beginning and were plainly moved by the dramatic power of it as it progressed, but they seemed shocked and bewildered by the bludgeon blows of the conclusion and the curtain fell upon a rather panicky silence. Then they rallied and gave both the performers and the composer what would pass in current journalese for an ovation.

The Wollastons' friends, who were out in pretty good force, crowded forward to be introduced to Mary's fiancé and to offer him their double congratulations. They found him rather unresponsive and decided that he was temperamental (a judgment which did him no serious disservice with most of them), though the kindlier ones thought he might be shy. Mary herself found something not quite accountable in his manner, but she forebore to press for an explanation and let him off, good-humoredly enough, from the little celebration of his triumph which she had had in mind.

THE fact was that he had come through the experience, which no one who has not shared it with him can understand, of discovering the enormous difference between the effect of a thing on paper, or even in its last rehearsal, and the effect of it when it is performed before an audience which has paid to see it. It is no wonder he was dazed, for the opera he found himself listening to had seemed like a changeling.

He worked all night over it and told La Chaise the next morning that he had made serious alterations in it and would need more rehearsals. The opera had been billed in advance for a repetition on the following Saturday night, the understanding among the powers being that if it failed to get a sufficient measure of favor the bill should be changed. It was touch and go, but the final decision was that it should have another chance.

So La Chaise agreed to March's request, ran over the composer's revised manuscript with a subtle French smile, sent for the timpani player, who was an expert copyist, and put him to work getting the altered parts ready instanter. March told Mary he was making a few changes and asked her to stay away from rehearsals so that on Saturday night, from out in front, she might get the full effect.

Really, as it turned out, he did not need any individual testimony, for one could have learned the effect of the new ending from half a mile away. When he came back into the wings from his fourth recall, he saw her face shining with joy through her tears. But his heart sank when he saw, standing beside her, Paula. He thanked his gods that Mary had a sense of humor.

Paula was smiling in high satisfaction, and she spoke first. "Well, stupid," she demanded, "what have you got to say for yourself, now?"

"Not a word," he answered, smiling too, "except that we have to live to learn."

Then he explained to Mary: "That ending—having the girl come back to life again, to sing some more after she'd been shot—was one of the things Paula was trying to make me do all the while. And some of the other changes were, too."

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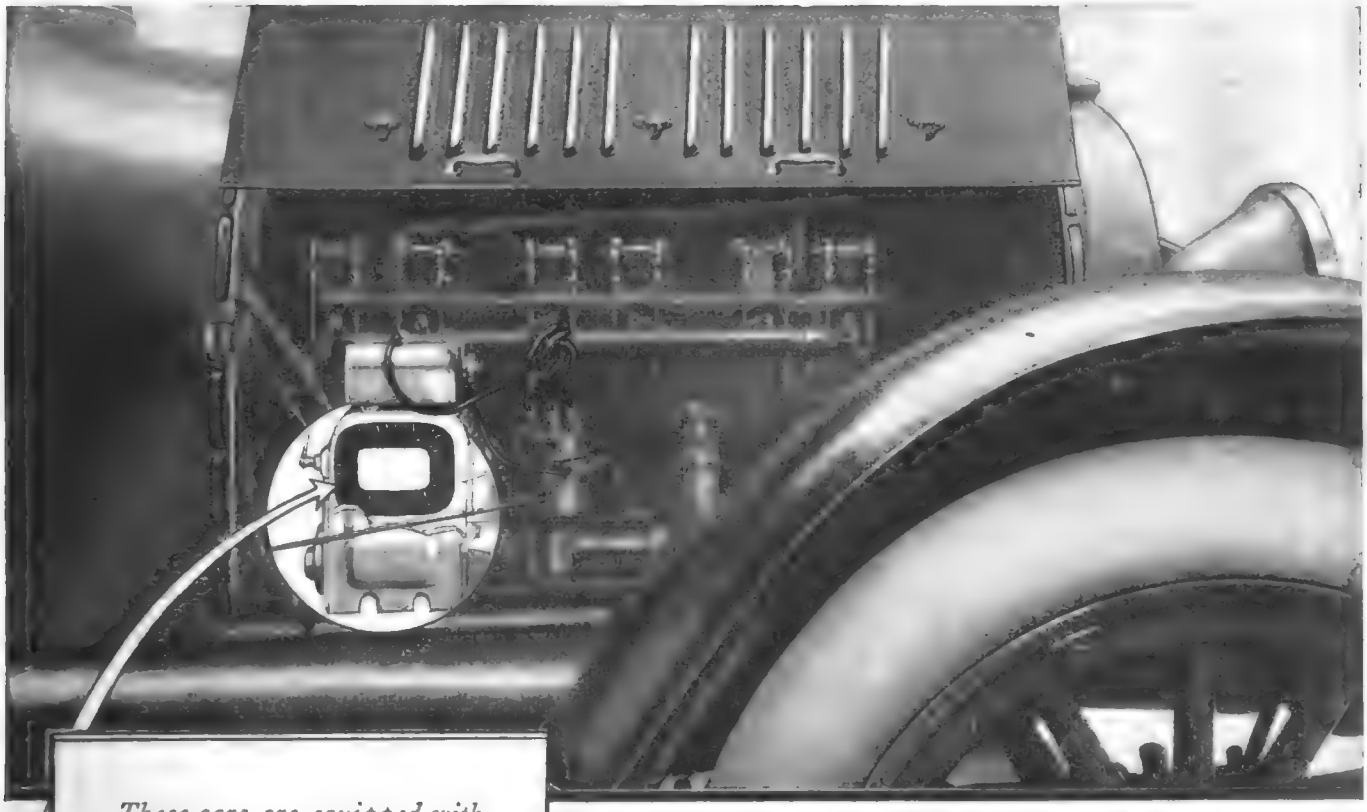

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"But not that trumpet!" said Paula, and he could only blush.

In a moment of dead silence, just before the crash that accompanied the descent of the curtain, he had scored for the C trumpet, muted and pianissimo, the first three bars of the "*Marseillaise!*" A flagrant trick, but it had served to remind the audience, bruised by the horror of abomination it had just witnessed, of the vengeance which, afar off, was gathering.

"I'd like to know what you'd have said to me," Paula went on, "if I'd asked you to do that!"

Mary laughed, a rather ragged laugh, but she pushed her lover toward the stage. "Oh, go back," she said. "They want you again, my dear."

THEY gave "The Outcry" two more performances during the next week, one of them being the closing performance of the season, and by that time, so far as a single success could be said to establish any one, March was established. He and Mary discussed this rather soberly as they drove home in the small car after the convivial wind-up supper at the Moraine, where this fact had been effusively dwelt upon. Their wedding was now less than a month off.

"I know," she admitted, "it looks as if I were all wrong. To go on being afraid of—harness and millstones and all that. But just the same— Oh, you can live my sort of life. That's been made plain enough. But I wish I could think of some way of making you sure that I could live yours, as well. Your old one; the Cheminеau one. The way it was when you came to Hickory Hill."

A few minutes later she gave a sudden laugh. "Tony," she said, "will you swear you will do something for me—without knowing what it is? Oh, it's nothing very serious. It's about our honeymoon. A girl has a right to decide about that, hasn't she?"

"You've got something up your sleeve all right," he said dubiously; but she remained severely silent until he gave in and promised.

"Well, then," she said, "this is how we'll spend that month after we're married:

"We'll take one of the farm Fords—Rush can spare one, I'm sure, in October—and we'll get some camping things and start out—oh, along any one of your old routes—without one single cent of money. And we'll tune pianos as we go; we'll live off the country. Really and honestly take to the road. For a month. If we can't find any pianos, we'll go hungry—or beg! The one thing we won't do, whatever happens, is to telegraph. After we've done that we'll come back and be—regular people. And I won't mind, then. Because, don't you see, you'll know. And if it's ever necessary to do it again, we'll do it again."

"There's no one in the world," he remarked in a voice that wanted to break, "no one in the world who'd have thought of that but you. But, my dear, I don't need any reassurance like that."

"Tony, dearest, don't be solemn," she implored him. "Won't it be *fun!*"

THE END

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HIDDEN CREEK

(*Continued from page 73*)

ask her to be your wife. And I wasn't going to allow you to do it—blind. I was going to advise you to come back three years from now and see her again. Maybe, this fine clean air and this life and this honest work and the training she gets from me will make her straight. My God, Cosme Hilliard, have you set eyes on Hudson? What kind of girl travels West from New York at Sylvester Hudson's expense and in his company and queens it in the suite at his hotel?"

"Miss Blake," he muttered, "do you *know* this?"

The cigaret had burned itself out. Cosme's face was no longer cruel. It was dazed.

She laughed shortly. "Why, of course I know Sheila. I know her whole history—and it's some history! She's twice the age she looks. Do you think I'd have her here with me this way without knowing the girl? I tell you, I want to give her a chance. I don't care if you try to test her out. I'd like to see if two months have done anything for her. She was real set on being a good girl when she quit Hudson. I don't *know*, but I'm willing to bet that she'll turn you down."

From far away up the mountain-side came the fierce baying of the dog pack. Cosme pulled himself together and stood up. His face had an ignorant baffled look, the look of an unskilled and simple mind caught in a web.

"I reckon she—she isn't coming down," he said slowly without lifting his eyes from the floor. "I reckon I'll be going. I won't wait."

He walked to the door, his steps falling without spring, and went out and across the porch and the clearing to his horse.

AT THE sound of the closing door there came a flurry of movement in the loft. The trap was raised. Sheila came quickly down the ladder. She was dressed in a pair of riding breeches and her hair was cropped like Miss Blake's just below the ears. The quaintest rose-leaf of a Rosalind she looked, just a wisp of grace, utterly unlike a boy. All the soft slim litheness with its quick turns revealed a little figure of unconscious sweet enchantment. But the face was flushed and tear-stained, the eyes distressed. She stood, hands on her belt, at the foot of the ladder.

"What! Has he gone? Why didn't he wait?"

Miss Blake turned a frank, indulgent face, but it was deeply flushed. "Oh, shucks!" she said, "I suppose he got tired. Why didn't you come down?"

Sheila sent a look down her slim legs. "Oh, because I *am* a fool. Miss Blake—did you *really* burn my two frocks—both of them?" Her eyes coaxed and filled.

"It's all they're fit for, my dear. You can make yourself new ones. You know it's more sensible and comfortable too to work and ride in breeches. I know what I'm doing, child. I've lived this way quite a number of years. You look real nice. I can't abide female floppery anyhow. What's it a sign of? Rotten slavery." She set her very even teeth together hard as she said this.

But Sheila was neither looking nor listening. She had heard horse's hoofs. Her

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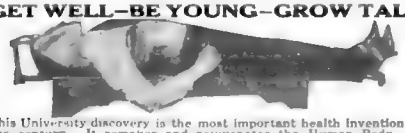

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cheeks flamed. She ran to the door. She stood on the porch and called.

"Cosme Hilliard! Come back!"

There was no answer. A few minutes later she came in, pale and puzzled.

"He didn't even wave," she said. "He turned back in his saddle and stared at me. He rode away staring at me. Miss Blake—what did you say to him? You were talking a long time."

"We were talking," said Miss Blake, "about dogs and how to raise 'em. And then he up and said good-by. Oh, Sheila, it's all right. He'll be back when he's got over being miffed. Why, he expected you to come tumblin' down the ladder head over heels to see him—a handsome fellow like that! Shucks! Haven't you ever dealt with the vanity of a young male before? It's as jumpy as a rabbit. Get to work."

And as though to justify Miss Blake's prophecy, just ten days later Hilliard did come again. It was a Sunday and Sheila had packed her lunch and gone off on "Nigger Baby" for the day. The ostensible object of her ride was a visit to the source of Hidden Creek. Really she was climbing away from a hurt. She felt Hilliard's wordless departure and prolonged absence keenly. She had not—to put it euphemistically—many friends.

HER remedy was successful. Impossible, on such a ride, to cherish minor or major pangs. She rode into the smoky dimness of pine-woods where the sunlight burned in flecks, and out again across the little open mountain meadows, jeweled with white-and-gold, blue-and-coral-colored flowers, a stained-glass window scattered across the ground. From these glades she could see the forest, an army of tall pilgrims, very grave, going up with long staves in their hands to worship at a high shrine. The rocks above were very grave too, and grim and still against the even blue sky. Across their purplish gray a waterfall streaked down, struck crystal by the sun. An eagle turned in great swinging circles.

Sheila had an exquisite lifting of heart, a sense of entire fusion, body blessed by spirit, spirit blessed by body. She felt a distinct pleasure in the flapping of her short sun-filled hair against her neck, at the pony's motion between her unhampered legs, at the moist warmth of his neck under her hand—and this physical pleasure seemed akin to the ecstasy of prayer.

She came at last to a difficult narrow cañon trail where the pony hopped skilfully over fallen trees, until for very weariness of his choppy determined efforts she dismounted, tied him securely, and made the rest of her climb on foot. Hidden Creek tumbled near her and its voice swelled. All at once, round the corner of a great wall of rock, she came upon the head. It gushed out of the mountain-side in a tumult of life, not in a single stream but in many frothy writhing earth-snakes of foam. She sat for an hour and watched this mysterious birth from the mountain-side, watched till the pretty confusion of the water with its half-interpreted voices had dizzied and dazed her to the point of complete forgetfulness of self. She had entered into a sort of a trance, a Nirvana. She shook herself out of it, ate her lunch, and scrambled quickly back to "Nigger Baby."

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It was late afternoon when she crossed the mountain glades. Their look had mysteriously changed. There was something almost uncanny now about their brilliance in the sunset light, and when she rode into the streaked darkness of the woods, they were full of ghostly unintelligible sounds. To rest her muscles she was riding with her right leg thrown over the horn as though on a side saddle. A great mass of flowers was tied in front of her. She had opened her shirt at the neck and her head was bared. She was singing to keep up her heart. Then, suddenly, she had no more need of singing. She saw Cosme walking toward her up the trail.

His face lacked all its vivid color. It was rather haggard and stern. The devils he had swept out of his heart a fortnight earlier had, since then, been violently entertained. He stepped out of the path and waited for her, his hands on his hips. But as she rode down she saw this look melt. The blood crept up to his cheeks, the light to his eyes. It was like a rock taking the sun. She had smiled at him with all the usual exquisite grace and simplicity.

WHEN she came beside him she drew rein, and at the same instant he put his hand on the pony's bridle. He looked up at her dumbly, and for some reason she too found it impossible to speak. She could see that he was breathing fast through parted lips and that the lips were both cruel and sensitive. His hand slid back along "Nigger Baby's" neck, paused, and rested on her knee. Then, suddenly, he came a big step closer, threw both his arms, tightening with a python's strength, about her and hid his face against her knees.

"Sheila," he said thickly. He looked up with a sort of anguish into her face. "Sheila, if you are not fit to be the mother of my children, you are *sure* fit for any man to love."

Her soft slim body hardened against him even before her face. They stared at each other for a minute.

"Let me get down," said Sheila.

He stepped back, not quite understanding. She dropped off the horse dragging her flowers with her, and faced him. She did not feel small or slender. She felt as high as a hill, although she had to look up at him so far. Her anger had its head against the sky.

"Why do you talk about a man's love?" she asked him with a queer sort of patience. "I think, I hope, that you don't know anything about a man's love. Oh, the *way* men love!" She thought with swift pain of Jim, of Sylvester. "Oh, the *way* they love!" And she found that, under her breath, she was sobbing "Dickie! Dickie!" as though her heart had called.

"Will you take back your horse, please?" she said, choking over these sobs which hurt her more at the moment than he had hurt her. "I'll never ride on him again. Don't come back here. Don't try to see me any more. I suppose it—it—the way you love me—is because I was a barmaid, because you heard people speak of me as 'Hudson's Queen.'" She conquered one of the sobs. "I thought that after you'd looked into my face so hard that night and stopped yourself from—from—my lips, that you had understood."

She shook her head from side to side so violently, so childishly, that the short hair lashed across her eyes. "No one ever

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will understand." She ran away from him and cried under her breath, "Dickie! Dickie!"

She ran straight into the living-room and stopped in the middle of the floor. Her arms were full of the flowers she had pulled down from "Nigger Baby's" neck.

"What did you want to bring in all that truck—?" Miss Blake began, rising from the pianola, then stopped. "What's the matter with you?" she asked. "Did your young man find you? I sent him up the trail after you." Her red eyes sparkled.

"He insulted me," gasped Sheila. "He dared to insult me." She was dramatic with her helpless young rage. "He said I wasn't fit to—to be the mother of his children. And—" she laughed angrily, handling behind Cosme's back the weapon that she had been too merciful to use, "and *his* mother is a murderess, found guilty of murder—and of worse!"

A sort of ripple of sound behind made her turn. Cosme had followed her, was standing in the open door and had heard her speech. The weapon had struck home and she saw how it had poisoned all his blood.

He vanished without a word. Sheila turned back to Miss Blake a paler face. She let fall all her flowers.

"Now he'll never come back," she said. She climbed up the ladder to her loft.

THERE she sat for an hour, listening to the silence. Her mind busied itself with trivial memories. She thought of Amelia Plecks. It would have comforted her to hear that knock and the rattle of her dinner-tray. The little sitting-room at Hudson's hotel with its bit of tapestry and its yellow tea-set and its vases filled with flowers seemed to her memory as elaborate, as artificial, as the boudoir of a French princess.

Farther than Millings had seemed from her old life did this dark little gabled attic seem from Millings. What was to be the end of this strange wandering, this withdrawing of herself farther and farther into the lonely places?

She longed for the noise of Babe's hearty irrepressible voice with its smack of chewing, of her step coming up the stairs to that little bedroom under Hudson's gaudy roof. Could it be possible that she was homesick for Millings? For the bar with its lights and its visitors and its big-aproned guardian?

Her lids were actually smarting with tears at the recollection of Carthy's big Irish face. He had been such a good, faithful watch-dog. Were men always like that—either watch-dogs or wolves? The simile brought her back to Hidden Creek. It grew darker and darker, a heavy darkness; the night had a new soft weight. There began to be a sort of whisper in the stillness—not the motion of pines, for there was no wind.

Perhaps it was more a sensation than a sound, of innumerable soft numb fingers working against the silence. Sheila got up, shivering, lighted her candle and went over to the small, four-paned window under the eaves. She pressed her face against it and started back. Things were flying toward her. She opened the sash, and a whirling scarf of stars flung itself into the room. It was snowing. The night was blind with snow.

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CHAPTER NINE

Work and a Song

IN THE studio skylight the misty autumn rain fell that night as the snow fell against Sheila's window-panes, with a light tapping. Below it Dickie worked. He had very little leisure now for stars or dreams. For the first time in his neglected and mismanaged life he knew the pleasure of congenial work: and this although Lorrimer worked him like a slave. He dragged him over the city and set his picture-painting faculty to labor in dark corners. Dickie, every sense keen and clean, was not allowed to flinch. No, his freshness was his value. And the power that was in him, driven by whip and spur, throve and grew and fairly took the bit in its teeth and ran away with its trainer.

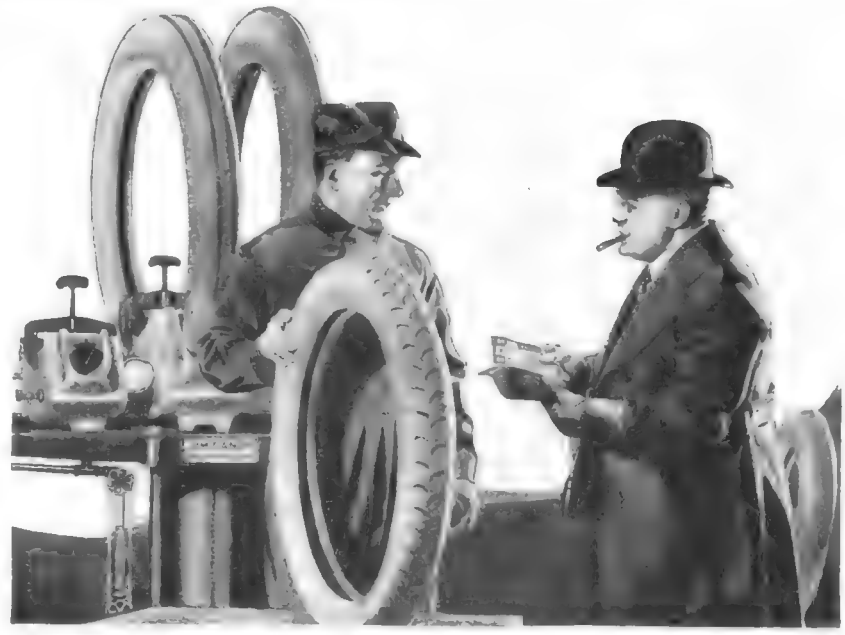
"Look here, my lad," Lorrimer had said that morning, "you keep on laying hands on the English language the way you've been doing lately and I'll have to get a job for you on the staff. Then my plagiarism that has been paying us both so well comes to an end. I won't have the face to edit stuff like this much longer."

Lorrimer did not realize in his amazement that Dickie's mind had always busied itself with this exciting and nerve-racking matter of choosing words. From his childhood, in the face of ridicule and outrage, he had fumbled with the tools of Lorrimer's trade. No wonder that now, when knowledge and practise and the sort of intensive training he was under magically fitted all the jumbled odds and ends into place, Dickie had stopped looking over his shoulder. The pursuing pack, the stealthy-footed beasts of the city, had dropped utterly from his flying imagination. There was only one that remained faithful—that craving for beauty—half-god, half-beast. Against him, Dickie still pressed his door shut. Lorrimer's gift of work had not quieted the leader of the pack. But it had brought Dickie something that was nearly happiness.

THE very look of him had changed: he looked driven rather than harried, keen rather than harassed, eager instead of vague, hungry rather than wistful. Only sometimes Dickie's brain would suddenly turn blank and blind from sheer exhaustion. This happened to him now. The printed lines he was studying lost all their meaning. He put his forehead on his hands. Then he heard that eerie, light tapping above him on the skylight. But he was too tired to look up.

It was on that very afternoon when Sheila rode down the trail with her flowers tied before her on the saddle, singing to keep up heart. It was that very afternoon when she had cried out half-consciously for "Dickie—Dickie—Dickie—!" And now it was as though the cry had traveled, that a memory of her leaped upon his mind: a memory of Sheila singing.

She had come into the chocolate-colored lobby from one of her rides with Jim Greely. She had had a handful of cactus flowers. She had stopped over there by one of the windows to put them in a glass. And to show Dickie, a prisoner at his desk, that she did not consider his presence—it was during the period of their estrangement—she had sung softly, as a girl sings when she knows herself to be alone: a



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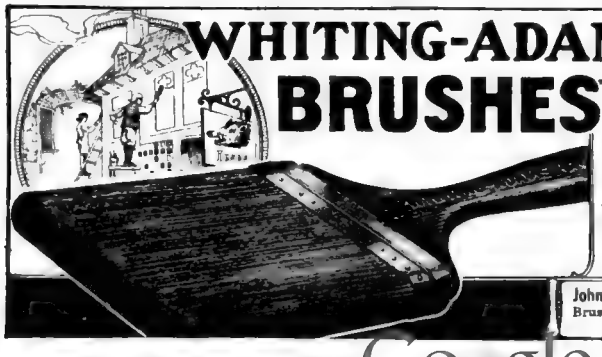

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little tender sad chanting song, that seemed made to fit her mouth. The pain her singing had given him that afternoon had cut a picture of her on Dickie's brain—just because he had tried so hard not to look at her. Now it jumped out at him against his closed wet lids. The very motions of her mouth came back, the positive dear curve of her chin, the throat there slim against the light. Hard work had driven her image a little from his mind lately. It returned now to revenge his self-absorption—returned with a song.

Dickie got up and wandered about the room. He tried to hum the air, but his throat contracted. He tried to whistle, but his lips turned stiff. He went over his book—no use, she still sang. All night he was tormented by that charming, hurting song. He sobbed with the hurt of it. He tossed about on his bed. He could not but remember how little she had loved him.

All at once, there came to him a mysterious and beautiful release. It seemed that the cool spirit, detached, winged, drew him to itself, or became itself entirely possessed of him. He was taken out of his pain and yet he understood it. And he began suddenly, easily, to put it into words. The misery was ecstasy, the hurt was inspiration, the song sang sweetly as though it had been sung to soothe, and not to make him suffer.

"O little song you sang to me—"

Ah yes, at heart she had been singing to him—

> A hundred, hundred days ago—
> O little song whose melody
> Walks in my heart and stumbles so!
> I can not bear the level nights
> And all the days are over-long,
> And all the hours from dark to dark
> Turn to a little song——

Dickie, not knowing how he got there, was at his table again. He was writing. He was happy beyond any conception he had ever had of happiness. That there was agony in his happiness only intensified it. The leader of the wolf-pack, beast with a god's face, the noblest of man's desires, that passionate and humble craving for beauty had him by the throat.

So it was that Dickie wrote his first poem.

CHAPTER TEN
Winter

WINTER snapped at Hidden Creek as a wolf snaps, but held its grip as a bulldog holds his. There came a few November days when all the air and sky and treetops were filled with summer again, but the snow that had poured itself down so steadily in that October storm did not give way. It sank a trifle at noon and covered itself at night with a glare of ice. It was impossible to go anywhere except on snow-shoes. Sheila quickly learned the trick and plodded with bent knees, limber ankles and wide-apart feet through the winter miracle of the woods. It was another revelation of pure beauty, but her heart was too sore to hold the splendor as it had held the gentler beauty of summer and autumn. Besides, little by little she was aware of a vague encompassing uneasiness.

Since the winter jaws had snapped them in, setting its teeth between them and all other life, Miss Blake had subtly

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and gradually changed. It was as though her stature had increased, her color deepened. Sometimes to Sheila that square strong body seemed to fill the world. She was more and more masterful, quicker with her orders, charier of her smiles, shorter of speech and temper. Her eyes seemed to grow redder, the sparks closer to flame, as though the intense cold fanned them.

ONCE they harnessed the dogs to the sled and rode down the country for the mail. The trip they made together. Sheila sat wrapped in furs beside the broad figure of her companion, who used a long whip and shouted to the dogs by name in her great musical voice of which the mountain echo made fine use. They sped close to the frozen whiteness of the world, streaked down the slopes and were drawn soundlessly through the columned vistas of the woods. Here, there and everywhere were tracks of coyotes, fox, rabbit, marten and the little pointed *patteran* of winter birds, yet they saw nothing living.

"What's got the elk and moose this season?" muttered Miss Blake. Nothing stirred except the soft plop of shaken snow or the little flurry of drifting flakes. These frost flakes lay two inches deep on the surface of the snow, dry and distinct all day in the cold so that they could be blown apart at a breath.

Miss Blake was cheerful on this journey. She sang songs, she told brief stories of other sled trips. At the post-office an old lonely man delivered them some parcels and a vast bagful of magazines. There was a brief passage of arms between him and Miss Blake. She accused him of withholding a box of cartridges, and would not be content till she had poked about his office in dark corners. She came out swearing at the failure of her search. "I needed that shot," she said. "My supply is short. I made sure it'd be here to-day."

There were no letters for either of them, and Sheila felt again that queer shiver of her loneliness. But on the whole it was a wonderful day, and under a world of most amazing stars, the small valiant ranch-house with its glowing stove and its hot mess of supper felt like home. Not long after that came the first stroke of fate.

The little old horse left them, and though they shoed patiently for miles, following his track, it was only to find his bones gnawed clean by coyotes or by wolves. Sheila's tears froze to her lashes, but Miss Blake's face went a little pale. She said nothing, and in her steps Sheila plodded home in silence. That evening Miss Blake laid hands on her.

The next instalment of ***Hidden Creek*** *will appear in the September number.*

Measure

By Ruth Lambert Jones

A week may mean so little or so much—
A bleak eternity you strive to end,
A flash of paradise you strain to clutch,
A new-found hope, an old despair, a friend!

August Nights

Will bring to millions Bubble Grains in Milk

Don't put aside your Puffed Grains when breakfast ends in summer. Children want them all day long, and there's nothing better for them.

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Puffed Rice

Corn Puffs

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The SPY WEB

(*Continued from page 21*)

waiting motor-car at Brigade Headquarters and rushed to Division and thence on to the brainier people at Corps and on to the still brainier people at Army Headquarters and finally on to the still brainier people at G. H. Q.

A triumphant progress with the solitary German wondering if we had not all taken leave of our senses. Telephones would ring. Wires be dispatched east, west. All about the solitary prisoner and what he was saying under examination. The staff believed in getting such a prisoner "hot," in questioning him while his system was still quivering from the strain of recent happenings in "no man's land." Accordingly an Intelligence officer would be dispatched down to the line, there to await, close up, the return of the raiding party with their prey.

One night I remember waiting so, cooped up in a dugout at Ypres, for the result of a raid. The result, a wee fair child, thin, forlorn and pathetic, was duly led in.

"Have a cigaret?"

"I'll never betray my fatherland!"

"I didn't ask you to betray anything. Have a cigaret."

"I'll never betray my fatherland—my father is a chemist."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"I am of good family. I'll never betray my fatherland."

Which was all wee Willie would say—a stout little heart in a weak and childish setting.

A prisoner of war is necessarily a cowed and fallen mortal, a man hiding his true self, and so one never knew if the complete absence of any hatred of England among these men were false or fact. Some had lived long in England. On the Somme the Canadians captured a cook formerly at the Ritz. He was kept very "hush hush" for three whole weeks in the corps-examining cage. He cooked so well. Bully beef came up to the table served in a dozen different ways and tasting like *Tournedos Rossini*. Whenever the local A. P. M. in charge of the cage asked why this one prisoner was being kept on, the Intelligence officer replied, "Hush! He's beginning to talk at last."

Racing Death

NOW and then tragedy stepped in. One had to examine a dying German in some casualty clearing station. "It's an unsavory business," you will say, "trying to outwit a dying man and make him say things he shouldn't!" Admitted, but what if the lives of dozens of Englishmen depended, as they once did, on what such a dying German said? A prisoner, an engineer, had been taken desperately wounded. He turned out to be engaged in mining. He knew all about a mine that was going to be blown that very night under the British position—he knew the appointed time and place. Hour after hour slipped by. The man lapsed into unconsciousness, then came back again. Under examination his replies were either inaudible or too vague and the vital information was never extracted from him. The mine blew up, causing serious loss.

The writer once had the strange experience of examining a German flying officer

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Adventure

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who had in former days been a fellow student. The prisoner was given a little barred-up room up at the top of the British officers' rest-house at St. Pol and there for two days, and well into each night, the process of "drawing him out" went on.

This young man was of the genteel order. Politely reticent, he kept his wits about him. We chatted and chatted—at times about everything under the sun except the business on hand, namely, the German flying corps and its work. Once it leaked out that the prisoner had been the observer who had controlled by wireless a big-gun shoot on Bethune market-place on a Saturday morning—market day. He was told that he had killed on that occasion no less than ninety harmless civilians, mostly women and children. It didn't seem to interest him particularly.

With such a customer it behooved one to probe and probe till some flaw of character revealed itself. In this particular case the prisoner's weakness was a liking for the good red wine of France. Accordingly, bottle upon bottle of Beaume was called for from the Hôtel de France—four bottles in all, and we drank together, and smoked and yarned. Once or twice a British flying officer arrived with a new list of questions to be asked. He was discreetly met outside the room. And so the battle of wits went on over the good red wine of France. But the staff proved ungracious enough to refuse to meet the bill for the wine. "We do not agree," quoth Mount Montreuil, "with the principle of giving captured prisoners alcohol. It has the effect of loosening the imagination of the examining officer."

The German Deserter

POSSIBLY the most valuable prisoner was the German deserter. A constant trickle of deserters came across to our lines during four years of stationary warfare, often two and three on the British front in a night. The total number of Germans who deliberately gave themselves up in this manner must have run into two or three thousand. The majority lay low while out on patrol, hid in some crater or in the long grass, satisfactorily "lost" their comrades and then crept across into the British front trench. It was a perilous game, scores were shot as they sought to make their way through our wire, but usually the cry of "*Kamerad!*" caused our men to stay their finger on the trigger.

The possibility had always to be guarded against that a "deserter" had been deliberately sent across to give false information.

Of the final phase of Intelligence work in the field, "tapping" the enemy's signal traffic, and listening to and locating his wireless stations, both aerial and on the ground, a queer tale could be written, but the time is not yet. One can only touch here on one aspect of it—the already-mentioned listening set.

> How long will the lull endure?
> Is he retreating? Why?
> Crawl to his camp and make sure,
> That is the work for a spy!

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and listen to what the Germans were saying in the trenches. Because there were those on the staff, lolling back in port-and-cigar clarity of thought, who were firmly convinced that soldiers in the front lines were wont to spend their time discussing the higher strategy of the campaign over their kettles and mess tins. And so one would be sent out to listen to *Gemeiner* Fritz expounding to his friend Hans the forthcoming attack in all its tactical subtlety and strategical nakedness.

In point of fact this was the sort of thing one overheard—if anything at all:

(*a*) German N. C. O. swearing at his working party.

(*b*) Couple of Germans talking sentimentally about their wives and families.

All of which would be duly committed to writing and sent back to the highbrows behind. And so the war went on. Next night the same thing again, the same German swearing at a different working party, the same couple of sentimental ones expressing their longing for the *Heimat*, plus possibly a few snores and grunts.

"*Moritz*" and "Itok"

IN 1916 all this ridiculous intelligence patroling was put to an end by the introduction of the listening apparatus known in the German Army as "*Moritz*," in the British Army as "Itok" or "It." The apparatus consisted of a small box in a dugout near the front line with wire leads running out from it into "no man's land." By the box in the dugout sat a couple of interpreters with telephonic clasps glued to their ears. Pencil in hand, they sat there all day long, listening, listening to what was going on in the trenches opposite. Stray snatches of conversation, an officer's order rasped out in Prussian, anything, everything, was duly noted down on specially printed daily listening sheets. One could even hear the Germans telephoning opposite.

As an instance of the one-time value of listening sets, seventy per cent. of all the identifications of units made by the Germans on the Somme in 1916 were made by "*Moritz*." At that period, the British were bringing new brigades and divisions into the line almost daily prior to the great attack in July. We thought this was being done with a fair modicum of secrecy. Imagine our chagrin when we captured a German Intelligence summary showing that every new British battalion to enter the line had been systematically identified almost directly as the result of listening! So clever were the German operators that they could at once tell, by the accent, whether the troops opposite were Scottish, English, Welsh, Irish, Canadian or Australian!

But the very success of the listening apparatus was the cause of its ultimate decline. Counter measures were taken against it. Troops were solemnly lectured against holding conversations likely to be of the slightest military value to an enemy. All proper names of officers, etc., were vigorously barred in the danger zone—three thousand yards from the line—and all telephone conversations absolutely barred in that zone. Gradually the listening apparatus overheard nothing at all from the enemy, but it served right to the end for policing the conversation of one's own troops in line and if any man transgressed

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the regulations, said something likely to be of value to the enemy, he was at once overheard by "It" and reported to headquarters.

Concocted Conversations

WE LATER started misleading the Germans by organizing concocted conversation so that these should be overheard and acted on by the enemy.

The great break thought at Amiens on August 8, 1918, was in no small measure due to this form of deceit being successfully put in practise. A party of Canadians, with strongly distinctive accents, were separated from their corps, in a line in front of Amiens, and taken up to Ypres. There they were located in the front line opposite a point where it was known a German listening set existed, and were told to discuss the forthcoming attack to be carried out at that point—Ypres—by the Canadian Corps. One man in particular was told to say "Hell! As if we Canadians hadn't done enough down south! Carting us up here for another bloody attack at Ypres! About time the Imperials did something!"

Which conversation was duly overheard and, as one afterward learned, swallowed up wildly by the German General Staff, who thought the whole Canadian Corps had been transferred up to Ypres. They learned different a day or two later.

Field Marshal Lord Allenby's final rout of the Turks in September, 1918, was aided in no small measure by a similar brilliant piece of Intelligence work of the most advanced order—namely, by the hoodwinking and deception of the enemy as to our plan of operations.

In early September, G. H. Q. officially moved up to Jerusalem and the main hotel there—the Hotel Fast, I believe—was solemnly converted into a typical headquarters on the grand scale. There was unlimited "functioning" and coming and going of staff-officers, while cars continually drew up outside and doors were marked, "Operations," "General Staff Intelligence," "D. A. Q. M. G.," etc., etc.

All of which preparations the Commander-in-Chief calculated would duly be reported to the Turko-German High Command across the Jordan. Spies in any enemy pay would, in effect, report that British G. H. Q. had installed itself in Jerusalem—*which lay behind the right wing of our line.*

This information, also, it was reckoned, would be duly conveyed to the enemy command opposite, which would now be in possession of two highly eloquent facts: British G. H. Q. had installed itself directly behind the British right flank, suggesting an attack in that quarter, and a great horse-show, clearly indicating "a dead sector," was to be held in a little town behind the British left flank resting on the coast.

On September nineteenth, all Joppa and Haffa, men, women and children, trailed out in one long procession to see the horse-show.

The same day our troops in the Joppa-Haffa sector attacked by surprise and broke through—while all Joppa and Haffa, men, women and children, were patiently waiting for that horse-show to begin. It never did.

The final instalment of ***"The Spy Web"*** *will appear in the September number.*

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Toolmaker	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
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CIVIL ENGINEER	BOOKKEEPER
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MINE FOREMAN or ENG'R	Cert. Pub. Accountant
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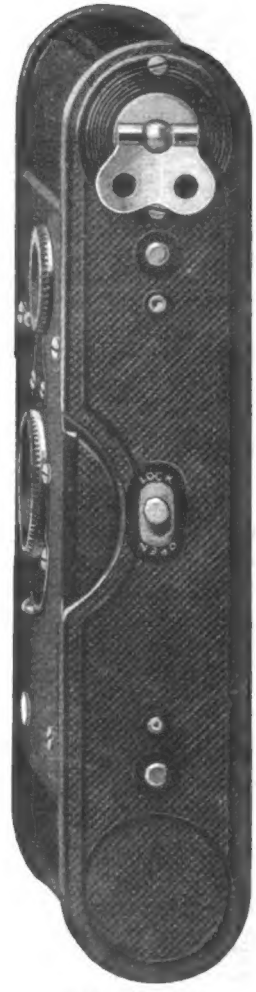

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